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# PHILOSOPHICAL AMUSEMENT

UPON THE

# Language *of* BEASTS.

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UPON THE

# LANGUAGE

OF

# BEASTS.

Written originally in *French*, by Father *Bougeant*, a famous *Jeſuit*; now Confined at *La Fleche*, on Account of this WORK.

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# Philoſophical Amuſement

UPON THE

# Language of BEASTS.

HOW inſnaring you are, Madam, and how well you know the extent of your Power over me! I did but once drop a Word in one of our Philoſophical Converſations, that I was of Opinion that Beaſts ſpoke and very well underſtood each other. Any body but you would have look'd upon this as one of thoſe Expreſſions which we are apt ſometimes to throw out without Proofs, and with no other Deſign but that of enlivening the Converſation. But you know me very well, you ſay, and though the Propoſition looks very much like a piece of Pleaſantry, you are pleaſed to ſay that I did not advance it at Random: nay, you will needs have me treat of it ſeriouſly, and give you an account of the Reaſons that perſuaded me to it. Though I have the utmoſt Deſire to pleaſe you, I don't know whether I could in any other Circumſtance prevail upon myſelf to obey you. For you know I have hardly any Leiſure to beſtow upon amuſing Diſſertations. By good Fortune I am at laſt got into the Country. I have left in Town the very Memory of the unpleaſant Employments which

make you ſometimes pity me. Now methinks I am here the Sovereign of whole Nature: in a delightful Abode, among a Circle of Amuſements whoſe Variety removes Diſguſt, and which I ſhare in common with a charming Set of Company. From this ſingle Circumſtance you eaſily will gueſs that I am at C***. Our Maſters in Voluptuouſneſs ſay, that a means to ſharpen the Edge of Pleaſures is now and then to interrupt the Chain of them by ſome trifling Imployment. What better Choice can I then make than to ſatisfy your Curioſity? Self-love, you ſee, is at the bottom of all we do, and it will be much leſs Merit than Pleaſure for me to obey your Commands. But we make Allowances to each other, and if you are but ſatisfied with my Performance, I have a Notion that you will eaſily forgive my not having therein altogether neglected my own Amuſement.

You then ask me whether I in good earneſt believe that Beaſts ſpeak? Why, Madam, I very ſeriouſly am of Opinion that Beaſts do ſpeak and underſtand each other every whit as well and ſometimes better than we do. Now is your Curioſity ſatisfied? Not a Jot. You will needs know my Reaſons for thinking ſo. If I was converſing with you, I would tell you that the Reaſon which perſuades me that Beaſts ſpeak, is, that Mr. R. ſpeaks: You would ſurely ſtrengthen this Argument by the Inſtance of Mrs. H**, and that Buffoonry perhaps would ſet us both o'laughing. But whoever writes muſt have a regard for his Readers. Nor ſhall I tell you that the Serpent had of old a long and coherent Converſation with *Eve*, and that *Balaam*'s Aſs ſpoke. It would be more needleſs ſtill here to alledge the Fable of the Horſes of *Achilles*. You would certainly reply, that of theſe Events ſome are Supernatural and the other Fabulous, and that they of courſe are no Argument in the Order of Nature. Now I underſtand you: I am to fetch the Proofs of my Opinion from Nature itſelf. Well, but don't you at the ſame time

expect

expect from me any wonderful Diſcoveries. You perhaps will be aſtoniſhed to find that you already your ſelf believe every Circumſtance of what I think on this Matter; and that I ſhall do nothing but unfold your own Thoughts to you, and let you into the Nature of intricate Sentiments which you have not ſufficiently examined. But ſome Preliminaries muſt be previouſly eſtabliſhed, and I am afraid the Acceſſory will not be ſhorter than the main Subject; which is a capital Fault, and againſt the Rules of exact Compoſition. But what of that, provided the whole amuſes you! Have Beaſts any Underſtanding? If they have, they ſpeak. But how do they ſpeak? Theſe ſhall be the three Heads of this Diſſertation.

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## I.

## *Of the Underſtanding of* BEASTS.

HAVE Brutes any Underſtanding? I am convinced you will not ſo much as heſitate upon an Anſwer to this Queſtion. *Deſcartes* ſhall in vain tell you that Beaſts are Machines: that all their Actions may be accounted for by the Laws of Mechaniſm: that before him, and even from the time of St. *Auſtin*, ſome Philoſophers have had ſomething like the ſame Notion. You have a Bitch which you love, and which you think yourſelf reciprocally loved by. Now I defy all the *Carteſians* in the World to perſuade you that your Bitch is a meer Machine. Pray conſider what a ridiculous Caſt this Opinion would give all of us who love Horſes, Dogs, and Birds. Imagine to yourſelf a Man who ſhould love his Watch as we love a Dog, and careſs it becauſe he ſhould think himſelf dearly beloved by it, ſo as to think that when it points out Twelve or One o'Clock, it does it knowingly and out of Tenderneſs to him. Were *Deſcartes*'s Opinion

nion true, ſuch would indeed be the Folly of all who believe that their Dogs have an Affection for them, and love them with Knowledge and what we call Sentiment.

I own that if the Syſtem of *Deſcartes* was ſupported by ſolid Proofs, the Conſequence would not be ſufficient to confute it: Men in this Caſe ſhould be pitied for being given over to ſo groſs an Illuſion. But Truth is for ever Truth let our Self-love ſuffer ever ſo much by it. By good luck the Opinion of this Philoſopher has no other Foundation than bare Poſſibilities. God, ſays he, was able to make meer Machines of Beaſts. He might have done it without any Impoſſibility. I can account for all their Actions by the Laws of Mechaniſm. Nay, there are even ſome of theſe Actions which ſeem to admit of no other Principle. *Ergo*, I have Reaſons to think that Beaſts are Machines. A very wrong way of Arguing as you ſee. For from matter of Fact to Poſſibility the Conſequence is certain; but from Poſſibility to matter of Fact the Conſequence is raſh, uncertain, and venturous. It is a meer Suppoſition, a Caſtle in the Air, which may ſerve for an Amuſement, but has no manner of Solidity in it.

Nay more. There is ſomething within us, which concurs with Reaſon to baniſh the *Carteſian* Syſtem from Society. It is not a bare Prejudice, but an inward Perſuaſion, a Sentiment whoſe Origin is this. Poſſibly the Men with whom I live, who ſpeak to me, who give me Anſwers, who argue and act together with me, may be nothing but meer Machines. For I know that I am actually thinking and have within me a thinking and knowing Principle. But I am not equally informed of what paſſes within other Men, and it cannot be denied but that God has the Power of making ſuch Creatures as ſhould have the Appearance only and Motions of Men, though they were at bottom nothing but Machines. However, notwithſtanding the Truth of this Principle, it would

would be altogether impoſſible for me (unleſs God ſhould expreſsly reveal it) to beat it into my Head, that the Men with whom I live are indeed nothing but Machines, made to aſſiſt or incumber, to pleaſe or torment me. And why ſo? It is becauſe when I ſee any one ſpeaking, reaſoning, and acting as I myſelf do, I know not what Sentiment within me joins with Reaſon and Common Senſe, to force me to believe that the Man whom I ſee has in him an active and knowing Principle altogether like my own. Now, Beaſts are in the ſame Caſe with regard to us. I ſee a Dog haſtening to me when I call him, careſs me when I ſtroke him, tremble and run away when I rate him, obey me when I command him, and give all the outward Signs of many different Sentiments; of Joy and Sadneſs, of Grief and Pain, of Fear and Deſire, of Paſſions, of Love and Hatred. I immediately conclude from thence, that a Dog has in him a Principle of Knowledge and Sentiment, be it what it will. Though I ſhould uſe my utmoſt Endeavour, to beat it into my Head that he is a meer Machine, and though all the Philoſophers in the World ſhould attempt to convince me of it, I feel myſelf hurried away by an inward Conviction, and by I know not what prevailing Force which perſuades me to the contrary: And this Sentiment it is, which for ever will contradict the *Carteſian* Opinion in the Minds of Men. It is likely therefore that this Philoſopher, whoſe Genius was ſo tranſcendent, eſpouſed a Syſtem ſo very oppoſite to our Notions out of meer Frolick, and for no other purpoſe but to contradict the *Peripatetics*, to whom he was a profeſſed Enemy, and whoſe Syſtem upon the Underſtanding of Beaſts in reality is not to be maintained.

Theſe Gentlemen who, according to the dark Principles of their unintelligible Philoſophy, aſſigned to Bodies a ſubſtantial and material Form, diſtinct however from Matter, and which was in them the Principle of all their Actions, would not doubtleſs refuſe

to Beaſts a Form of this Kind. On the other Hand, as they allowed that Beaſts were indowed with Sentiment and Knowledge, and acted according to Knowledge and Sentiment; they fain would have attributed to them a ſpiritual Soul like that of Man: But this the Principles of Chriſtianity did not allow. And really if Beaſts had a ſpiritual Soul, that Soul ſhould then be immortal and free, it ſhould be capable of meriting or of doing amiſs, of Recompenſe or of Puniſhment: They ſhould have a Paradiſe and a Hell appointed for them; Beaſts ſhould be a Kind of Men, or Men a Kind of Beaſts; all which Conſequences are unwarrantable by the Principles of Religion. The *Peripatetics*, thus obliged to be contented with their ſubſtantial-material Form, to avoid one Inconvenience fell into another, being of courſe obliged to ſay that this ſubſtantial Form was in Beaſts the Principle of their Knowledge and Actions, the moſt abſurd Sentiment according to the eſtabliſh'd Principles of Philoſophy and Religion. For in the eſtabliſhed Philoſophy we know only two Subſtances; one thinking, having Sentiments, knowing, and reaſoning, which is Spirit: The other extended, diviſible, moveable, capable of occaſioning Sentiments and Knowledge by its Union with Spirit, but altogether incapable itſelf of knowing and having Sentiments, which is Matter. Here we perceive at one View all the Contradictions neceſſarily flowing from the Opinion of the *Peripatetics*. A ſubſtantial Form, which is neither Spirit nor Matter: Something which has a knowing Faculty and yet is no Spirit: A ſubſtantial-material Form, which is no Matter; in ſhort, material Sentiments and a material Knowledge. A very dangerous Principle! which might become a Weapon in the Hands of Unbelievers againſt the Spirituality of our Soul. Is it not a Wonder that ſo monſtrous an Opinion ſhould have ſo long kept its Ground in the Chriſtian Schools?

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Some Philoſophers pretended to rectify it. Why, ſaid they, ſhould we acknowledge in the Univerſe only theſe two Subſtances, Spirit and Matter? Has not God been able to create a middle Subſtance, between one and the other, inferior to Spirit and ſuperior to Matter, incapable of reaſoning, but capable of Sentiment and Knowledge? One might indeed at firſt be apt to believe this, and you perhaps ſooner than any. But, Madam, have a Care if you pleaſe. This would at once replunge you into the Uncertainty of the *Carteſian* Sentiment, and the Darkneſs of the *Peripatetic* Opinion. For 1. This Syſtem is a meer Suppoſition, void of Proof and deſtitute of Foundation. 2. What Notion can we frame to ourſelves of a Subſtance which is neither Spirit nor Matter? With regard to us who know no other but theſe two Subſtances, a Middle one is a Chimera, an *ens rationis*, which we have no Perception nor any Notion of. And who knows but that which is a meer Chimera with regard to us, is really ſo in Nature and in itſelf? If it is ſo in itſelf, God has not been able to create it, becauſe he can make no *ens rationis*. Now who ſhall reſolve ſo reaſonable a Doubt?

An antient Author, whoſe Works are collated among thoſe of the Fathers, *Firmianus Lactantius*, explained himſelf more frankly. He pretended that God had granted the Uſe of Reaſon to whatever breathes, but to Beaſts for the Preſervation of their Lives only, without any religious Duty; and to Men to enable them to acquire Immortality and an eternal Happineſs, by the Practice of a religious Worſhip. What a Notion! To be ſure *Firmianus* did not ſee, that ſuppoſing a reaſonable and of courſe a ſpiritual Soul without any Duty of Religion, was undermining the Foundations of the Law of Nature and of all Religion, degrading the ſpiritual Soul, deſtroying the Immortality of its Nature, and bringing us down to the State of Beaſts, in trying to advance theſe to our own.

You ſee I only touch upon Syſtems, for fear I ſhould tire you by particular Arguments. However, this is all Philoſophy teaches with regard to the Knowledge of Beaſts. How narrow is the human Underſtanding, you will ſay, how ſhort its Lights, how great its Obſcurity! It is enough to fright one. We know we exiſt and think: We ſee Facts; we know the Exiſtence of a thouſand Things; but when we are asked how and why they are ſo; we then loſe ourſelves in an Abyſs of frivolous Conjectures and falſe Suppoſitions: We confuſe our own Brains with a thouſand vain Arguments, which, far from enlightening our Minds, have generally no other effect than to ſmother that little Portion of Light which Common-ſenſe has imparted to us. We do not underſtand ourſelves, how then can we underſtand the Nature of Beaſts and of all without us?

Let me pray you to do one Thing. Go to the *Indies*, to *China* or *Japan*, and there you will find Philoſophers of the Heathen, Deiſt, or Atheiſt Kind, who will argue if not with greater Capacity, at leaſt with greater Freedom. One will tell you that God has created ſeveral Species of Spirits, ſome more perfect, ſuch as the good and bad *Genii* are; ſome leſs perfect, which are Men, and others much more imperfect ſtill, which are the Beaſts. Another will tell you, that the Diſtinction of the Spirit and Matter is chimerical and impoſſible to be demonſtrated; that he ſees no Manner of Inconveniency in thinking that there is but one Subſtance which you may call by what Name you pleaſe; that this Subſtance has in Beaſts as well as in Men an Organization, a Modification, a Motion, ſomething in ſhort which makes it think more or leſs perfectly: And theſe Gentlemen acknowledging neither the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion nor the Authority of the Church; you will be under the Neceſſity (in order to attack them in their Retrenchments) either to begin by making them Chriſtians, or to go back to metaphyſical Principles very difficult to be unravell'd. But I hope

hope you will ſpare yourſelf the Trouble of the Voyage, and chuſe, as I myſelf do, to ſtick cloſe to this greateſt of Principles, *viz.* All theſe Syſtems are contrary to the Chriſtian Religion; of courſe they are abſolutely falſe.

Be comforted, Madam, here is another Hypotheſis, which has nothing common with any of thoſe I juſt laid before you. It is a Syſtem entirely new, which will divert you at leaſt by its Singularity, and which I ſhall here repeat to you in the very Words of the Author himſelf, whom I heard producing it a while ſince in Company, and with an Air of Gravity mixed with Buffoonry, which made it doubtful whether he was himſelf perfectly perſuaded of it.

Every Body, ſaid he, agrees that Beaſts have a knowing Faculty; they have then a Soul. But is that Soul Matter or Spirit? It muſt be one of the Two, and yet you dare affirm neither. You dare not advance that it is Matter, becauſe you muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe Matter to be capable of thinking. Nor will you ſay that it is a Spirit; this Opinion bringing with it Conſequences contrary to the Principles of Religion. Well, ſaid he, I ſhall now reſolve all your Difficulties. Know then, that Beaſts have a ſpiritual Soul like ours, and that this Opinion, far from contradicting the Principles of Religion, is altogether agreeable to it as well as to Reaſon. You eaſily judge that this Introduction ingroſſed all our Attention. The whole Company ſmiled, perhaps maliciouſly, and our Impatience for knowing the new Syſtem occaſioned a profound Silence. The Author went on.

Reaſon, ſaid he, naturally inclines us to believe that Beaſts have a ſpiritual Soul; and the only Thing which oppoſes this Sentiment is, the Conſequences that might be inferred from it; and this, among others; that Men would differ from Beaſts only by the Degree of *Plus* and *Minus*; which would demoliſh the very Foundations of all Religion. Therefore, added he, if I can elude all theſe Conſequences, if I

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can aſſign to Beaſts a ſpiritual Soul without ſtriking at the Doctrines of Religion; it is evident that my Syſtem being moreover the moſt agreeable to Reaſon, is the only warrantable Hypotheſis. Now I can and ſhall do it with the greateſt eaſe imaginable, I even have Means by the ſame Method to explain many very obſcure Paſſages in the Holy Scripture, and to reſolve ſome very great Difficulties which are not well confuted. This we ſhall unfold in a more particular Manner.

Religion teaches us that the Devils, from the very Moment they had ſinned, were reprobate, and that they are doomed to burn for ever in Hell. But the Church has not as yet determined whether they do actually indure the Torments to which they are condemned. It may then be thought that they do not as yet ſuffer them, and that the Execution of the Verdict brought againſt them, is reſerved for the Day of the final Judgment. It is otherwiſe with the Souls of Men; the Church having determined that our Souls are judged the very Inſtant of their Separation from the Body, and that the Sentence is immediately executed; ſo that thoſe who die in God's Diſpleaſure, are that very Inſtant plunged into the Flames of Hell. But the Church has made no ſuch Deciſion with regard to the Devils. 'Tis true, we very commonly fancy ſo, and a Multitude of People there are, into whoſe Minds it never came to call it in Queſtion. But this Opinion, on account of its being believed raſhly and without Examination (it being on the other Hand ſupported neither by Scripture nor by any other Deciſion) is not in the Church a Tradition to which one is obliged to ſubmit; and the more ſo becauſe my Sentiment is not altogether new, and I might mention ſome Authors who have given Hints of it; among others an Eccleſiaſtical Writer, *Victor* Prieſt of *Antioch*, who has expreſsly publiſhed it in his Works.

Now, Madam, you muſt know, that while the Author was thus delivering himſelf, an Abbe and Doctor

Doctor who was preſent, a Man of Wit indeed, but warm in Diſpute and prejudiced in Favour of his own Opinions, was muttering and grumbling to himſelf, with an Air of Diſcontent which our Author eaſily diſcovered. What is the matter with you, Sir, ſaid he; you ſeem not to be pleaſed? No more I can be, replied the Doctor, for your Propoſition is downright Hereſy. This you are to prove replied the Author. Nothing in the World ſo eaſy ſaid the Doctor; and I ſhall do it from the Authority of the Scholaſtick Authors, and the Holy Fathers. You ſhant, by all that's good! Said the Lady whoſe Houſe we were at; at leaſt you ſhan't do it now. We are all of us curious to know the new Syſtem; you muſt, if you pleaſe, hear it from Beginning to End, and afterwards you ſhall be at Liberty to diſpute as much as you pleaſe upon your Scholaſticks, and your Holy Fathers. The Lady was obeyed, and the other went on.

When I advance, ſaid he, that the Devils do not as yet ſuffer the Torments of Hell, if it was an arbitrary Suppoſition like the Mechaniſm of *Deſcartes*, or the middle Subſtance which ſome other Philoſophers have imagined; every one would have a right to reject my Suppoſition, and I ſhould perſuade no body into it. But I beg the Doctor to be pleaſed to hear the Proofs whereupon my Propoſition is ſupported. It is an Article of our Faith that the Devil tempts us in order to provoke us to Sin: That he lays Snares to make us fall: That he is for ever roving about us, as St. *Peter* has it, watching an Occaſion to devour us. He fills our Minds with wicked Suggeſtions: He ſeizes upon Bodies, and when he has once made himſelf Maſter of them, he does not always betray his Preſence by Fits of Madneſs. He ſometimes Laughs, he Sings, and delights in puzzling the Miniſters of the Church who attempt to conjure him forth. He argues with the utmoſt Coolneſs, as when he tempted *Jeſus Chriſt* in the Deſart, and ſeduced *Eve* in the earthly Paradiſe. Now imagine to yourſelf ſome Body

Body in Hell, ſuch as Scripture repreſents it, penetrated through his whole Subſtance, devoured and conſumed by a Fire, whoſe Violence is beyond every thing; and then conſider if a Man or a Spirit in that Condition can poſſibly be taken up with any other Thought than that of the horrid Torture he endures. If you tell me that he is tranſported with Fury, and that all his Moments are conſtantly filled by new Fits of Rage and Deſpair, I ſhall neceſſarily conceive it. But that he ſhould have leiſure enough to think of tempting and ſhifting with us, is altogether incomprehenſible, and we ſhould be obliged to conclude that the Devils do not tempt us, or that the tortures of Hell are not ſo very great as they are repreſented; two Conſequences equally oppoſite to Faith. Let us then conclude, that the Devils do not as yet undergo their Torments.

What our Divines ſay, that the Devils carry their Hell along with them every where, I know very well and confeſs, I even think it is not to be queſtioned. But let us explain ourſelves. That it may be truly ſaid that the Devils carry their Hell with them every where, it is neceſſary that they ſhould actually undergo the Tortures of it? No. It is enough that they be condemned to it by an irrevocable Decree, of which they every where carry with them the Shame and primary Effects, as I ſhall immediately explain. Would we not ſay of a Criminal whoſe Puniſhment ſhould be deferred in order to make him lead a miſerable and ignominious Life for a few Days, that he carries every where with him the Wheel he is to expire on? Thus it is that the Devils carry their Hell with them every where. Their Sentence is pronounced without any hopes of Mercy; they are condemned without Remorſe, they every where carry the eternal Blemiſh of it; the horrid Thought never leaves them, and conſequently they every where carry their Hell along with them, that is, the Idea of the Hell for them appointed. But we have a thouſand Rea-

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ſons to believe that they do not as yet ſuffer the real Tortures of it?

And why ſhould we not believe it, if the Holy Scripture ſays it expreſly. Let the Doctor himſelf judge of it. When *Jeſus Chriſt* beforehand pronounced Sentence on the Reprobate, what are his Words? *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting Fire*, prepared *for the Devil and his Angels.* Math. xxv. 41. He ſays not that the Devil and his Angels actually burn in that Fire. He only ſays, that that Fire is *prepared* and waits for them at the laſt Day, which ſhall be the beginning of their Torments. This agrees with the other Paſſage of the Goſpel, in which the Devils driven out by *Jeſus Chriſt* complain to him for the anguiſh he gives them in driving them out of the Bodies of the poſſeſſed. *Art thou come*, ſay they to him, *to torment us before the time?* If the Devils actually ſuffer the Tortures of Hell, what reaſonable meaning can one aſſign for this Expreſſion? The evil *Jeſus Chriſt* did them in driving them out, was certainly too inconſiderable in compariſon of their Torments, to deſerve their Complaints: But being not to ſuffer Hell-fire before the laſt Day, they were in the mean time not altogether inſenſible to Pains of a much leſs Degree, and they thought they had ſome Reaſons to complain that *Jeſus Chriſt* ſhould torment them before the time appointed by Divine Juſtice. Here is ſomething ſtill more deciſive, *viz.* what St. *Jude* ſays in his Epiſtle *v.* 6. that *God keeps them in everlaſting Chains under profound darkneſs*, and reſerves for the Judgment of the great Day *the Angels which kept not their firſt Eſtate.* The firſt Words of this Paſſage are evidently metaphorical, and by theſe *everlaſting Chains* we are to underſtand the irrevocable Judgment God has paſſed upon theſe rebellious Spirits, and that the *profound Darkneſs* ſignifies the Abyſs of Humiliation into which their Sin has plunged them. But the other Words of the Text are ſo very clear and preciſe, that no other reaſonable Meaning can be given them, but that which agrees with my opinion. I

might perhaps take an additional Advantage of ſome other Texts of the Scripture; But I hope thoſe I have juſt quoted are ſufficient to convince any Man not given over to Prejudice.

I never ſhall tell you Madam, what Tortures the Doctor ſuffered during this Expoſition of the Holy Scripture. He once more would needs interrupt the Author, and pretended that theſe Paſſages might be interpreted in quite another Manner. But the Company a ſecond time obliged him to hold his Tongue, and deſired the Author at laſt to tell them what it was he pretended to infer from what he had been ſaying: For they did not as yet perceive what all this Preamble aimed at. What I pretend to infer, ſaid he, is, that till Doom's-Day comes, God, in order not to ſuffer ſo many Legions of reprobate Spirits to be of no uſe, has diſtributed them thro' the ſeveral Spaces of the World, to ſerve the Deſigns of his Providence, and make his Omnipotence to appear. Some continuing in their natural State, buſy themſelves in tempting Men, about ſeducing and tormenting them, either immediately as *Job*'s *Devil*, and thoſe that lay hold of human Bodies, or by the Miniſtry of Sorcerers, and of Phantoms. Theſe wicked Spirits are thoſe whom the Scripture calls the *Powers of Darkneſs*, and the *Powers of the Air*, God, with the others, makes Millions of Beaſts of all Kinds, which ſerve for the ſeveral Uſes of Man, which fill the Univerſe, and cauſe the Wiſdom and Omnipotence of the Creator to be admired. By that Means, added he, I eaſily conceive how on the one Hand the Devils can tempt us, and on the other how Beaſts can think, know, have Sentiments and a Spiritual Soul, without any way ſtriking at the Doctrines of Religion, I am no longer ſurpriz'd to ſee them have Dexterity, Forecaſt, Memory, and Judgment. I ſhould rather have Occaſion to wonder at their having no more of thoſe Qualities, ſince their Soul very likely is more perfect than ours. But I diſcover the Reaſon of this. It is becauſe in Beaſts as well as in ourſelves, the Operations

tions of the Mind are dependent on the material Organs of the Machine to which is it is united, and theſe Organs being groſſer and leſs perfect in Beaſts than in us, it follows that the Knowledge, the Thoughts, and the other Spiritual Operations of Beaſts muſt of courſe be leſs perfect than ours; and if theſe proud Spirits know their own diſmal State, what an Humiliation muſt it be to them, thus to ſee themſelves reduced to the Condition of Beaſts! But, whether they know it or no, ſo ſhameful a Degradation is ſtill with regard to them that primary Effect of the Divine Vengeance I juſt mentioned. It is an anticipated Hell.

Here a very beautiful Lady, whom this Diſcourſe put out of Humour, could not help interrupting the Author of the New Syſtem. Sir, ſaid ſhe with a good deal of Fire, it is of little Conſequence to me whether the Devils be humbled or no, and actually ſuffer the Tortures of Hell; but I will never allow Beaſts to be Devils. How! ſhall my little *Bitch* be a Devil that lies with me all Night and careſſes me all Day? I never will grant you that. And I ſay the ſame of my *Parrot*, added a young Lady; it is a charming Creature; but if I was perſuaded it was a little Devil, I am ſure I ſhould no longer indure it. I conceive, ſaid the Author, how great your Averſion for this Syſtem muſt be, and I excuſe it: But give yourſelf the trouble to reflect upon it, and you ſhall ſee that it is only the Reſult of a Prejudice which muſt be conquered by Reaſon. Do we love Beaſts for their own ſakes? No. As they are altogether Strangers to human Society, they can have no other Appointment but that of being uſeful and amuſing. And what care we whether it be a Devil or ſome other Being that ſerves and amuſes us? The Thought of it, far from ſhocking, pleaſes me mightily. I with Gratitude admire the Goodneſs of the Creator, who gave me ſo many little Devils to ſerve and amuſe me. If I am told that theſe poor Devils

are doomed to ſuffer eternal Tortures, I admire God's Decrees; but I have no manner of Share in this dreadful Sentence. I leave the Execution of it to the Sovereign Judge, and notwithſtanding this I live with my little Devils, as I do with a Multitude of People of whom Religion informs me that a great Number ſhall be damned. But the Cure of a Prejudice is not to be effected in a Moment: It is done by Time and Reflection. Give me leave then lightly to touch upon this Difficulty, in order to obſerve a very important thing to you.

Perſuaded as we are that Beaſts have Intelligence, have we not all of us a thouſand times pitied them for the exceſſive Evils, which the Majority of them are expoſed to, and in reality ſuffer? How unhappy is the Condition of Horſes, we are apt to ſay, ſeeing a Horſe whom an unmerciful Carman is murthering with Blows! How miſerable is a Dog that they are breaking for Hunting! How diſmal is the Fate of Beaſts living in Woods! They are perpetually expoſed to the Injuries of the Weather, always ſeized with Apprehenſions of becoming the Prey of Hunters or of ſome wilder Animal; for ever obliged, after long Fatigue, to look out for ſome poor inſipid Food; often ſuffering cruel Hunger, and ſubject moreover to Illneſs and Death! If Men are ſubject to a Multitude of Miſeries that overwhelm them, Religion acquaints us with the Reaſon of it, *viz.* their being born Sinners. But what Crimes can Beaſts have committed, by Birth to be ſubjected to Evils ſo very cruel?

At theſe laſt Words our Doctor made ſo furious a Grimace, ſtriking his Hand on his Knee, that the Company could not help laughing. I ſee, Sir, ſaid the Author, addreſſing to him, what it is that offends you. You imagine that the Reflection I have been making, is contrary to what you call in Theology *the State of pure Nature*; but you are miſtaken. I acknowledge as well as you, that, independant of all Sin, God might have created Man

Man (and much more the Beaſts) ſubject to all the Miſeries which are the natural Conſequences of their Conſtitution. But the Evils we endure, are they in reality ſuch as they would have been in *the State of pure Nature?* No. You are obliged to acknowledge that they are much greater, and many Divines propoſe, even after St. *Auſtin*, this Exceſs of Miſery as a Proof of the Exiſtence of an original Sin. What are we then to think of the horrid Exceſſes of Miſery undergone by Beaſts: Miſeries indeed far greater than thoſe of Men? This is in any other Syſtem an incomprehenſible Myſtery; whereas nothing is more eaſy to be conceived from the Syſtem I propoſe. The rebellious Spirits deſerve a Puniſhment ſtill more rigorous, and happy it is for them that their Puniſhment is deferred. In a Word, God's Goodneſs is vindicated; Man himſelf is juſtified: For what Right can he have, without Neceſſity, and often in the way of meer Diverſion to take away the Life of Millions of Beaſts, if God had not authorized him ſo to do; and Beaſts being as ſenſible as ourſelves of Pain and Death, how could a juſt and merciful God have given Man that Privilege, if they were not ſo many guilty Victims of the divine Vengeance?

But hear, continued he, ſomething ſtill more convincing, and of greater Conſequence. Beaſts by Nature are extremely vicious. We know very well that they never ſin, becauſe they are not free; but this is the only Condition wanting to make them Sinners. The voracious Beaſts and Birds of Prey are cruel. Many Inſects of one and the ſame Species devour each other. *Cats* are perfidious and ungrateful. *Monkeys* are miſchievous. *Dogs* are envious. All Beaſts in general are jealous and revengeful to exceſs, not to mention many other Vices which we obſerve in them: and at the ſame time that they are by Nature ſo very vicious, they have, ſay we, neither the Liberty nor any Helps

to reſiſt the Biaſs that hurries them into ſo many bad Actions. They are, according to the Schools, neceſſitated to do Evil, to diſconcert the general Order, to commit whatever is in Nature moſt contrary to the Notion we have of natural Juſtice, and to the Principles of Virtue. What Monſters theſe, in a World originally created for Order and Juſtice to reign in! This is in good part what formerly perſuaded the *Manicheans*, that there were of neceſſity two Principles of things; one good, the other bad; and that Beaſts were not the Work of the good Principle. A monſtrous Error! But how then ſhall we believe that Beaſts came out of the Hands of the Creator, with Qualities ſo very ſtrange? If Man is ſo very wicked and corrupt, it is becauſe he has himſelf through Sin perverted the happy Nature God had given him at his Formation. Of two things then we muſt ſay one: either that God has taken delight in making Beaſts ſo vicious as they are, and in giving us in them Models of what is moſt ſhameful in the World; or that they have, like Man, original Sin which has perverted their primitive Nature.

The firſt of theſe Propoſitions finds very difficult Acceſs to the Mind, and is an expreſs Contradiction of the Holy Scripture, which ſays, that whatever came out of God's Hands at the time of the Creation of the World *was good*, and even very *good*. For if Beaſts were at that time what they are now a Days, how could they be ſtiled *good*, and very good? What good can there be in a *Monkey*'s being ſo miſchievous, a *Dog* ſo full of Envy, and a *Cat* ſo perfidious? But then many Authors have pretended that Beaſts, before Man's Fall, were different from what they now are, and that it was in order to puniſh Man, they were rendered ſo wicked: But this Opinion is a meer Suppoſition, of which there is not the leaſt Foot-ſtep in the Holy Scripture. It is a pitiful Subterfuge to elude a real Difficulty. This at moſt might be ſaid of the Beaſts with whom Man has a ſort of Correſpondence,

ſpondence, but not at all of the Birds, Fiſhes, and Inſects, which have no manner of Relation to him. We muſt then have recourſe to the ſecond Propoſition, and ſay, that the nature of Beaſts has, like that of Man, been corrupted by ſome original Sin: Another Hypotheſis void of Foundation, and equally inconſiſtent with Reaſon and Religion in all the Syſtems, which have been hitherto eſpouſed concerning the Soul of Beaſts. What Party are we to take? Why, admit of my Syſtem, and all is explained. The Souls of Beaſts are refractory Spirits, which have made themſelves guilty towards God. This Sin in Beaſts is no original Sin. It is a perſonal Crime, which has corrupted and perverted their Nature in it's whole Subſtance. Hence all the Vices and Corruption we obſerve in them, though they can be no longer criminal, becauſe God, by irrecoverably reprobating them, has at the ſame time diveſted them of their Liberty.

I am ſtill to ſatisfy you, ſaid the Author, upon two Queſtions which you will infallibly ask me; *viz.* How are the Devils united to the Bodies of Beaſts, and what do they become at the Hour of Death? To anſwer the firſt Queſtion, we ſhould be let into the Myſtery of the Union of our Soul and our Body; and this no Philoſopher will be ever able to conceive. Let us then be contented with ſaying, that, as Man is a Soul and an organized Body united, ſo is each Beaſt a Devil united to a Body organized; and that as Man has not two Souls, Beaſts likewiſe have each but one Devil. This is ſo very true, that *Jeſus Chriſt* having one day driven out many Devils, and theſe having asked his leave to enter into a Herd of *Swine* that fed near the Sea, he permitted it, and they entered into the Swine accordingly. But what happened? Each *Swine* having his own Devil already, there was a Battle, and the whole Herd threw themſelves headlong into the Sea.

This Union once ſuppoſed, we ought not to be ſurprized at any thing in Beaſts. They muſt have a Knowledge and a Sentiment like ours; and from what paſſes within-us, they muſt be jealous, choleric, perfidious, ungrateful, and ſelf-intereſted like ourſelves. They muſt be either gay or ſad according to Events or their preſent Diſpoſition. They muſt have Love and Hatred, and Deſire for multiplying their Species, an Affection for their Young, and a Care to bring them up: In a Word, they muſt do all what they do, and which ſeems incomprehenſible to us when a ſpiritual Soul is not granted them. However, it may be proper to obſerve, that as the rebellious Spirits have deſerved to be degraded in this Manner for having abuſed their Reaſon and Lights, *God* has been minded to humble them with regard to their very Reaſon, by making them depend on Organs ſo very groſs, that it is infinitely inferior to that of Men. Thence it happens, that we now and then judge that Beaſts do ſome acts of Reaſon; but we have great Reaſon to believe, that they never make many coherent and reflected Judgments like ourſelves, becauſe their Organs will not allow of Motions ſo very delicate. This conſtitutes *Automata*, which moſt commonly act only mechanically, though with Knowledge; and this is to a Spirit the utmoſt Degree of Humiliation. It is not thus with their Senſations: For the rebellious ſinned not by their Senſes: They had none. Beſides, Senſes are always material Organs and groſs Interpreters. Let their Uſe be ever ſo perfect, it is always a Degree of Humiliation to a Devil created to be a pure Spirit, and of courſe to know and perceive in a much more perfect Manner. For this Reaſon it was, that God has not given Beaſts Senſes of a coarſer kind than ours. The Spirits which animate them are ſufficiently puniſh'd, by being made ſubject to material Senſes. It even ſeems that God, either to humble us alſo, or to cauſe the Variety of his Productions to be admired, has

has been pleaſed to give ſome Beaſts Organs and Senſations much nicer and more perfect than ours. For Inſtance, the Birds of Prey have ſo piercing an Eye, the Dog ſo exquiſite a Smell, the Spider ſo ſubtile a Feeling, that no Man can come up to them in theſe Points.

The extreme Littleneſs of an infinite Number of Beaſts (It is ſtill the Author that ſpeaks) might impoſe upon ſuch Perſons as have not ſufficiently reflected on the Nature of Things. How! will one ſay, is it poſſible to believe that a Devil can be lodged in a Fly, a Flea, or a Mite? But how! might not he be as well lodged there as in a Horſe or an Ox? A Spirit having abſolutely no Extenſion, in order to a Body does not require that this Body be more or leſs extenſive. The very minuteſt Quantity of Matter is enough for him, provided it be organized: and there is none, tho' ever ſo ſmall, but what might be ſo. God might have made Man as little as the minuteſt Inſect; and if he had done it our Souls would not value themſelves the leſs, or think themſelves the leſs happily lodged on that account. The Reaſon is, becauſe there is no abſolute Magnitude in the World. A Flea in itſelf is neither large nor ſmall. It is ſmall only with regard to us who are infinitely larger, and it is large with regard to a Multitude of other Creatures which are a Million of Times minuter. All this proves, that Ignorance alone or ſome falſe Prejudices can make us ſet between Beaſts any Diſtinction or Preference founded on their large or little Size. It is not, therefore, more difficult to think that a Devil may be united to the Body of a Fly than to that of an Elephant; and to a Spirit it is indeed a Thing abſolutely indifferent.

As to the ſecond Queſtion, added the Author, concerning what becomes of the Devils after the Death of Beaſts, it is again very eaſy to be anſwered. *Pythagoras* taught formerly, and at this Day ſome *Indian* Philoſophers believe the *Metempſycoſis*; that

is are of Opinion, that at the Moment of our Death our Souls paſs into the Body of a Man or a Beaſt, to begin a new Life again, and ſo ſucceſſively till the end of Ages. This Syſtem which is unwarrantable with regard to Men, and is beſides proſcribed by Religion, is admirably well ſuited to Beaſts in the Syſtem I have here propoſed, and claſhes neither with Religion nor with Reaſon. The Devils, by God appointed to be Beaſts, neceſſarily out-live their Bodies, and would ceaſe to anſwer their Deſtination, if at the Moment of the Deſtruction of their firſt Body they paſſed not immediately into another, to begin to live a-new under another Form. Thus ſuch or ſuch a Devil, after having been a Cat or a Goat, is forced to paſs into the Embryo of a Bird, a Fiſh, or a Butter-Fly, to animate them. Happy thoſe who light upon a good Lodging, as many Birds, Horſes, and Dogs do; and woe to ſuch as become Beaſts of Burden, or the Hunter's Game. It is a kind of Lottery, in which the Devils very likely have not themſelves the Choice of their Lots.

It might be thought however, that they never change their Species, and that the Devil which had once been a Horſe, is always to be a Horſe again. But this Opinion would be liable to very great Difficulty. For as the Species of Beaſts oftentimes increaſe and diminiſh upon the Earth, it would thence follow, either that there would be ſometimes too few Devils to ſupply a certain Species, or ſometimes too many, ſo that ſome would remain in Relays and without Imployment, which is not likely; whereas by admitting a general Metempſycoſis, you prevent all Difficulties.

All Kinds of Beaſts moſt commonly produce a much greater Number of Eggs or Embryos than is neceſſary to perpetuate them in the ſame Number. Therefore the Devils, whom God has deſtined to animate them, never want Employment or Lodging. For if any Species happens to fail or be conſiderably diminiſh'd,

diminiſh'd, they may paſs into the Eggs of another and multiply that. This is what ſometimes cauſes thoſe prodigious Clouds of Locuſts, and thoſe innumerable Swarms of Caterpillars, which lay waſte our Fields and Gardens. We look into Cold or Heat, Rains, or Winds, for the Cauſe of theſe amazing Multiplications, and the true Reaſon is, that in the Year they come, or in the foregoing, an extraordinary Number of Deer, Birds or Fiſhes have periſhed with all their Eggs; ſo that the Devils which animated them have been obliged, ſuddenly, to get into the very firſt Species they found diſpoſed to receive them, and which had as it were ſo many Houſes to be let.

In ſhort, concluded the Author, you ſee, that the more this Syſtem is ſearched into, the more you find in it ſome of theſe Characters of Probability which ſtrike and perſuade us. It is a Source of extraordinary Obſervations, which ſatisfies our Curioſity. I find the Foundations of it in Religion itſelf. Reaſon ſupplies me with the moſt likely Proof of it, and Prejudices can oppoſe to it none but frivolous Difficulties. Can a Man refuſe his Approbation of a Syſtem ſo plauſible and ſo well ſupported on every Side?

I know not, Madam, what you will think of a Syſtem ſo new and ſo very ſingular. But I muſt tell you that its very great Singularity was mighty agreeable to the whole Company; ſome took it meerly for a Piece of Wit and an ingenious Pleaſantry; others look'd upon it as a Syſtem that deſerved to be ſeriouſly believed. For my part, as you know I am a perfect *Pyrrhonian* in Point of Syſtems; I was contented with giving the Author the Praiſes, which good Breeding requires in a Caſe like this, without explaining myſelf farther. The Truth is that I knew and ſtill know not what to think of it. For on the one hand I find that the Syſtem very well anſwers all Difficulties, and that it would be no eaſy Matter to prove it falſe. But on the other hand I don't ſee it

built upon Foundations ſufficiently ſolid to produce a real Perſuaſion. And as it beſides concerns ſome Points of Religion, I think it would be a Raſhneſs to eſpouſe it without the tacit Conſent at leaſt of the Doctors. Our *Abbe* was not ſo Circumſpect as I. He would needs return to the Charge. The Author let him ſpeak long enough, and then was preparing to give an Anſwer. On this Play was propoſed. The two Champions retired in a corner of the Room, to continue their Diſpute, and I could not hear their Arguments.

But I take notice that here is already much Writing, and not one Word mentioned of the principal Queſtion you made me upon the Language of Beaſts. Let us then make an End of this firſt Diſcuſſion, and reſume our Propoſitions. It is certain that Beaſts have an intelligent Faculty, be the Principle of it what it will. It is a Fact ſo generally confeſſed by all Men, that I did not ſo much go about proving it to you as I intended to amuſe you by expoſing the ſeveral Opinions. Let us therefore examine now whether they ſpeak or no.

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## II.

### *Of the Neceſſity of a Language between* BEASTS.

FIRST, let us evidence the Poſſibility of it. In the common Uſe, what we call ſpeaking is making one's ſelf underſtood by a ſequel of Words articulated, whereby Men have agreed to expreſs ſuch an Idea or Sentiment; and the total Collection of theſe Words is what we call a Language, which is different among different Nations. If Beaſts ſpeak, they certainly do it not by means of a Language of this Kind. But it is impoſſible, without this Aſſiſtance,

to

to make one's ſelf underſtood, and to ſpeak in reality? Of this we cannot poſſibly doubt. Angels ſpeak to each other, and yet have no Voice. Let us lay aſide what is ſupernatural. When we are pleaſed, every thing in us ſpeaks. Do we not every Day ſpeak by certain Looks, by a Motion of the Head, a Geſture, nay! The leaſt Sign in the World? Imagine to yourſelf, Madam, a Nation of Dumb-People. Do you think they would not deliver their Minds to each other, and by Cries, Geſtures, Looks, and Poſtures, ſupply the Want of our Words and Phraſes? For my Part, I think they would live very well in a Society like ourſelves, and that after the firſt among them ſhould have with ſome Difficulty eſtabliſhed ſome ſenſible Signs and Expreſſions, they would eaſily teach them to their Children: That theſe would improve more and more in this way of expreſſing themſelves, and by Degrees would form, not indeed a Tongue, but a very diſtinct Language, and as intelligible to them as our Dialects are to us. Of this we have ſuch amazing Inſtances, that it is impoſſible to call it in Queſtion; and I ſhall even maintain, that the ſame Idea being expreſſible many different ways, there might poſſibly be in ſuch a Language a Choice of Expreſſions, Energy, Eloquence, Simplicity, Metaphors, and perhaps even Affectation. No doubt but there would alſo be Obſcurity and Equivocations in it: But where are theſe not to be found? Let us then apply this Example to Beaſts. They have no Tongues; but why ſhould they not have a Speech? The thing evidently is poſſible: Let us now examine whether it is neceſſary.

All Beaſts, it muſt be owned, have a knowing Faculty: Nor do we ſee that the Author of Nature can have given them this Faculty, for any other Purpoſe that to inable them to provide for their Wants, their Preſervation, and whatever is fit for their Condition, and ſuitable to the peculiar kind of Life he has appointed for them. Let us add to this Principle, that many

many Species of Beaſts are made to live in Society at large, and the others to live either Male and Female in a kind of Houſe-keeping, or in a kind of Family with their Young till they are brought up. A few Exceptions, which might be oppoſed to this general Law, are not to be accounted any thing. To begin now by mentioning the firſt Species only: What Uſe do we conceive Beaſts might make their Underſtanding for the Preſervation and Welfare of their Society, and of courſe for their own peculiar Good reſulting therefrom, if the Members of that Society have not among themſelves a common Language perfectly known to every one of them, let us reſume the Example of a Nation of dumb People, and ſuppoſe that beſides the want of Speech, Nature has even refuſed them all poſſible Means of communicating their Thoughts to one another: What uſe could they make of their Knowledge and Underſtanding? It is plain that being able neither to underſtand nor to be underſtood, they could neither afford nor receive any Help from the Society. Far from mutually aſſiſting each other, they neceſſarily muſt be in a perpetual Oppoſition. The Diſtruſt would be general. Injuries, Hatred, and Revenge, would break all Principles of Union betweeen them, and they being ſoon changed into wild Beaſts, would think of nothing but deſtroying each other. In a Word, no more Communication, no more Society.

It would be much the ſame thing with the Beaſts which live in Society, if you ſuppoſe that they have not a Language among themſelves to underſtand each other, be it what will, you can no longer conceive how their Society could ſubſiſt. Let us take the Beavers for an Inſtance. Theſe Animals, to be under Covert and ſecure, live in ſmall Huts of Clay, which they build for themſelves with amazing Dexterity on the Border of a Lake, and ſet upon Piles. But they have found that, as they ſtood in need of each other's Help to build their Dwellings, they muſt

muſt of courſe live in Society. They then get thirty, forty, more or leſs together, and after they have pitched upon a Soil fit for their Habitation, and where they hope to live more conveniently and ſecure, they divide among themſelves the Works neceſſary for the Conſtruction of their Abodes. Some go and fetch the Wood: Others provide the Clay which ſome of them are commiſſioned to bring, and this by lying upon their Back with their Paws up, as we know they do, to make a ſort of Cart of their Body, which the others drag along to the Place where it is to be uſed. There one does the Part of a Maſon, another that of a Labourer, and a third that of an Architect. A Tree is firſt cut at the Root, and falls into the Lake. This done, other Artificers work it: Some prepare the Piles, others drive them into the Ground, while others are forming the ſeveral Timbers neceſſary. All is done orderly and in perfect Concert. You would think you ſaw the *Tyrians* building the City of *Carthage*. The lazy or the froward are undoubtedly puniſhed. The Centries faithfully do their Duty. The Work is carried on to Perfection. It is the Admiration of Men themſelves; and then the little Corporation quietly enjoying the Benefit of their Work, no longer have any other Thought, but that of living eaſy, and of multiplying their Species each in his little Family.

Does not ſo coherent and ſo well executed an Underſtanding evidently intimate the Neceſſity of a Language among theſe Animals, and their having a Speech whereby they mutually communicate their Thoughts to each other? Pray, Madam, conſider what is ſaid of the Tower of *Babel*. The Means God made uſe of to make that extravagant Project abortive (a ſure and infallible Means indeed!) was the Confuſion of their Languages. The Workmen having all on a ſudden forgot the common Language which they ſpoke before, and being no longer able

to

to underſtand each other, became incapable of acting in concert, and were obliged to give over their Enterprize. The ſame muſt happen to any Society whoſe Members ſhall not be able to underſtand one another. Bring thirty People together ſpeaking each a different Language, and you will ſoon ſee Diſorder and Confuſion among them. What would then happen, if theſe thirty People could not ſpeak at all, and had no Means left of delivering their Thoughts? Let us ſuppoſe the Beavers to be really in that Condition; what wou'd be the Conſequence? I ſee in a Moment all the Society diſordered; without Chief, without Subordination, without Counſel, without Concert. I ſee all the Works which require the Aſſiſtance of many Hands; neceſſarily abandoned. No more Centinels that watch for the public Safety: No dwelling in common. Every one, as in the Tower of *Babel*, ſhall retire and live by himſelf, in ſhort no more Society.

Cannot Inſtinct, ſome will ſay, ſupply the Want of a Language? Two Beavers meet and join together, becauſe their Inſtinct inclines them towards forming a Society. A third, then a fourth, and many others ſucceſſively come and increaſe the Company. The Society is formed. The ſame Inſtinct inclines them to go and fetch Wood and Earth to build their Huts, juſt as Birds go and fetch what is neceſſary to build their Neſts. If they ſeem to divide the Work among them, it is becauſe ſome of them ſeeing the others bring the Earth, in their Turn go and fetch Wood; and likewiſe when they ſee part of them buſy about preparing the Mortar; they, not to remain idle, buſy themſelves in working the Wood. All this it ſeems requires no more than Eyes and Inſtinct. If you ſee Centinels placed upon the Avenues, it is becauſe in a Troop there is always ſome one more timorous or prudent than the reſt, who makes the Precautions he uſes for his own Safety ſerve for the Utility of others.

The Objection has ſomething ſpecious in it, but it muſt be examined to the Bottom. What is Inſtinct? It is a Sentiment void of Reflection, whoſe Principle is unknown; a blind Deſire, an undeliberate Biaſs, a mechanick Motion of our Soul, which prompts us to do a Thing without knowing any Reaſon why. This Sentiment, if there is ſuch a Thing, is commonly ſo intricate in Men, that it remains without Effect: Only it is thought to produce very ſingular Effects in ſome of them. It is wonderful in Beaſts, they ſay, and by it their moſt admirable Actions are explained. Nothing in reality is more convenient than this Inſtinct. But when will Men ceaſe to miſtake Words for Things? 1. What we call Inſtinct is ſomething very obſcure and unknown in itſelf. 2. What Proofs have we that Beaſts have more of this Inſtinct than Men? The Prejudices in this Point have been carried ſo far as to believe, that Inſtinct in Beaſts is preferable to Reaſon in Men. But upon what Foundation is human Reaſon thus degraded to do honour to the Inſtinct of Beaſts? 'Tis true, we ſee Birds making their Neſts with very great Induſtry. We ſee ſome Animals purge themſelves by means of certain Herbs which they find out. The Sparrows likewiſe purge themſelves and their Young with Spiders or other Inſects.

The Pidgeons and many Birds ſwallow Gravel to facilitate their Digeſtion. The Storks, they ſay, taught Man the Uſe of Cliſters. Theſe are ſome of the moſt wonderful Effects of the pretended Inſtinct of Beaſts. For we muſt not give Credit to many Fables that are ſet about concerning this Matter; and I ſee in all this nothing fit to be cried up. 3. But ſince we cannot refuſe Beaſts a knowing Faculty; why do we give them a needleſs Inſtinct? Why ſhould we attribute to this unknown Inſtinct what may be the ſimple Effect of their Underſtanding; and ſince it is really in conſequence of a Knowing Faculty that Man performs the ſame Operations, why ſhould not the ſame

Principle alſo rule in Beaſts ? Is not this what we call multiplying Beings without Neceſſity, and indeavouring to throw a Veil upon a Thing in itſelf plain and perſpicuous ? For my part, I am perſuaded that what we believe Beaſts do by an Inſtinct peculiar to them, they like ourſelves do it in conſequence of their Knowledge, and with Knowledge. I am even apt to think that what we call Inſtinct is a meer *Ens Rationis*, a Name void of reality, a Remain of Peripatetic Philoſophy. But if Inſtinct muſt be admitted, I never will believe that Beaſts are better provided with it than Men, ſo long as no other Argument ſhall be brought to prove it than Facts which I can account for from ſimple Knowledge; and if that Inſtinct is not ſufficient to Man to guide him, it muſt of courſe be ſtill leſs ſufficient to Beaſts.

I then reſume my Example and my Argument. If it is not by particular Inſtinct that Beavers make their little Settlements in ſo much Concert, they then do it in conſequence of their Knowledge. Now I have proved by the Suppoſition of a whole Nation of People abſolutely Dumb, that a knowing Faculty without a reciprocal Communication by means of a ſenſible and well-known Language, is not ſufficient to maintain Society, or to execute any Undertaking that requires Union and Concert. Let us then conclude that, ſince Nature, which always acts with ſo much Wiſdom, has made the Beavers to live in Society : ſhe has given them all the means neceſſary for that Purpoſe, and of courſe the Faculty of Speaking, let their Language be what it will ; ſince it is impoſſible for any Society to ſubſiſt without this Help. And as Nature every where follows the ſame Rules, let us apply this Argument to the Bees, the Ants, and all kinds of Beaſts that live in Society ; and by that Means a conſiderable Part of them muſt be indowed with the Faculty of Speech.

But

But can the ſame Thing be ſaid of the Beaſts which do not live in Society? Such are the major Part of the Quadrupeds, the Birds, the Fiſhes, the Reptiles, which are undeniably the greater Number. I don't know, Madam, whether you perceive the Conſequence of the firſt Sep I have juſt now ventured to make. For if there are any Beaſts that ſpeak, they muſt of neceſſity all of them ſpeak. If Beavers and Parrots have a Language, the Oyſter and Snail muſt have theirs alſo. I am, as it were, engaged in a dangerous Defilee, all the Avenues of which are guarded by the ſtrongeſt Prejudices. But in the Land of Syſtems, as well as in others, the firſt Step is often the only difficult. I have proved, methinks, with Probability enough, that the Beaſts living in Society muſt needs have a Language. I am next to extend the Propoſition to all the other Species of Beaſts.

And indeed, why ſhould Nature have refuſed to Some of them a Privilege it has granted to the Reſt? Nothing would be more contrary to the Uniformity ſhe affects to all her Productions. I know that Nature, which is asSparing in Superfluities as ſhe is Prodigal in things Neceſſary, does nothing in vain. But it is not neceſſary that a Couple of Beaſts joined to form a Houſhold and a Family together, a Couple of Birds for inſtance, be able to underſtand and mutually to impart their Sentiments and Thoughts to each other? Bring together and aſſociate two People abſolutely Dumb, I defy the Union to ſubſiſt, if they have no Means left of agreeing about their Affairs, and of expreſſing their mutual Wants. Two Sparrows without any kind of Language, will lye under the ſame Impoſſibility of living together, and all the Inconveniency of the dumb Society I have mentioned, will be ſeen in their little Family. In a Word, the Neceſſity of a Language between a Huſband and his Wife, to inable them to live together, is juſt the ſame as for a whole Society.

Nature, without any Impoſſibility, might have made ſome Animals to live in an abſolute Solitude, and accordingly have given them both Sexes, to be able to multiply themſelves as Plants do, without the Aſſiſtance of Copulation, and differently from Snails and Worms, which, though they have both Sexes, cannot uſe them any otherwiſe than by coupling. If you ſuppoſe that there are Beaſts of this kind in the Univerſe, I ſhall readily confeſs that Nature, had ſhe indowed them with the Faculty of Speaking, would have given them a needleſs Talent. But wherever two Beaſts ſhall ſtand in an habitual Need of each other, and form among them a laſting Society, they of neceſſity muſt ſpeak to each other. How is it to be conceived, that two Sparrows in the Heat of their Luſt, or in the Cares attending the bringing up of their Family, have not a thouſand things to ſay to each other? This would be the Place of inlivening our Subject by curious Particularities. But my Intention is not to make a philoſophical Work degenerate into Buffoonry. You ſee I inſiſt upon none but ſolid Arguments, and I ſay it is impoſſible in the Order of Nature, that a Sparrow who loves his Wife, has not, in order to perſuade her, a Language full of Expreſſion and Tenderneſs. He muſt ſcold her when ſhe plays the Coquet: He muſt menace the Sparks that come to cajole her: He muſt be able to underſtand her when ſhe calls him: He muſt, while ſhe is aſſiduouſly ſitting on her Brood, be able to provide Neceſſaries for her, and diſcern whether it is ſome Food ſhe aſks for, or Feathers to repair her Neſt; for all which Things a Language is neceſſary.

Many Beaſts, one will ſay, have not a ſettled and permanent Houſhold like Birds: (For by the bye Birds are the Model of conjugal Conſtancy and Fidelity:) This I very well know, and their Number is even very great. Such are Dogs, Horſes, Deer, and almoſt all Quadrupeds, Fiſhes and Reptiles. But I ſhall always inſiſt upon a Principle granted and acknowledged as certain. Nature is too much like herſelf

ſelf in Productions of one and the ſame Genus, to have put between Beaſts ſo eſſential a Difference as that of ſpeaking or not ſpeaking at all would be. Upon this Principle it is, that tho' we hardly know the Seeds of Coral, of Muſhrooms, of Truffles, and of Fern, we are nevertheleſs perſuaded that theſe Plants proceed from Seeds; becauſe it is the Manner in which Nature produces all the reſt. Let us then conclude, that if Nature has given the Beaſts living in Society and in a Family the Faculty of Speaking; ſhe doubtleſs has beſtowed the ſame Advantage upon all the reſt. For we are not now upon one of thoſe accidental Differences which Nature loves to diverſify in the different Species of one Genus. There are not perhaps in the whole World two Faces perfectly alike; but yet all Men have a Face. There are among the ſeveral Species of Animals Differences ſtill greater. Some have Wings, others have Fins, others have Feet and Legs. The Serpents have none of theſe: But all Animals have the Faculty of moving and of tranſporting themſelves wherever they pleaſe according to their Wants. Among Animals there are ſome who ſee and hear more or leſs perfectly, but yet they all hear and ſee. It is the ſame thing with the Faculty of Speech. This Faculty perhaps is more perfect in the Beaſts which live in Society and form Families; But it being in ſome, we muſt believe it to be in all of them, but more or leſs perfect according to their reſpective Wants.

It is even obſervable, that the Animals who live neither in Society nor in a ſettled Family, yet have in each Species a Sort of Commerce and Society among themſelves. Such are the Quadrupeds, the Fiſhes, the Reptiles, the Birds themſelves independently of their Houſhold, as Starlings, Partridges, Ravens, Ducks, and Hens. Now, what Utility could Beaſts fetch from endeavouring to live in Society one with another, if they did it not for mutual Aſſiſtance and reciprocally to have the Benefit of

their Knowledge, Diſcoveries, and of all the Helps they can afford each other; and how could they do ſo, if they underſtand not one another? All the Arguments I have already uſed to prove that the Beaſts which live in Society muſt have a Language, here again find their Place and their whole Energy. All the Difference muſt be only in the Degrees of *Plus* and *Minus*, and if we judge of this from Matters of Fact, probably there is no Difference at all.

The Wolves, for inſtance, hunt with very great Skill, and together contrive warlike Stratagems. A Man croſſing a Field ſaw a Wolf who ſeemed to be watching a Flock of Sheep. He informed the Shepherd of it, and adviſed him to cauſe this Animal to be purſued by his Dogs. I ſhan't be ſuch a Fool replied the Shepherd; The Wolf yonder is there only to divert my Attention, and another Wolf who is working on the other Side, only watches the Moment when I ſhall ſet my Dogs upon this, to ſnatch, one of my Sheep from me. The Man who was going by, willing to be ſatisfied of the Fact, promiſed to pay for the Sheep, and the Thing happened juſt as the Shepherd had ſaid it would. Does not ſa Stratagem ſo well concerted evidently ſuppoſe, that the two Wolves had agreed together, one to ſhew and the other to hide himſelf? Now how is it poſſible to agree in this Manner without the Help of Speech?

A Sparrow finding a Neſt which a Swallow had juſt built ſtanding very convenient for him, poſſeſt himſelf of it. The Swallow ſeeing the Uſurper in her Houſe called for Help to expel him. A thouſand Swallows came full ſpeed and attacked the Sparrow: But the Latter being covered on every Side, and preſenting only his large Beak at the narrow Entrance of the Neſt, was invulnerable and made the boldeſt of them who durſt approach him to repent their Temerity. After a Quarter of an Hour's Combat all the

the Swallows diſappeared. The Sparrow thought he had got the better, and the Spectators judged that the Swallows had abandoned the Undertaking. Not in the leaſt. Immediately we ſaw them return to the Charge; and each of them having provided a little of that tempered Earth wherewith they make their Neſts, they all at once fell upon the Sparrow, and incloſed him in the Neſt, to periſh there, ſince they could not drive him thence. Do you believe, Madam, that the Swallows have been able to hatch and concert this Deſign all of them together, without ſpeaking to each other?

Wonders are recounted of the Monkies when they go o' Plundering. A Troop of Soldiers that goes o' Forraging in the Neighbourhood of the Enemy, cannot march in greater Order or with more Precaution. I could mention a thouſand like Inſtances: But this would require a Volume; and I aim only at ſupporting my Argument. Men hitherto have always made uſe of theſe Examples to prove that Beaſts have a knowing Faculty; and they have been in the right ſo to do, becauſe it is really unconceivable that Beaſts can do ſuch ſingular Actions without Knowledge. But we evidently have not ſufficiently examined into the Caſe, and it being equally impoſſible for Beaſts to do theſe Actions without Speaking, we are moreover obliged to conclude that they alſo ſpeak to one another. Now, Madam, I would beg of you here to obſerve, that this is not an Opinion or a Syſtem founded upon meer Conjectures or probable Explications, but an Argument ſupported by ſenſible and palpable Facts. I ſay ſenſible Matters of Fact, ſuch as theſe I have juſt alledged, and a thouſand the like in every Kind. Enter into a Wood where there are a Parcel of Jays. The firſt who ſees you gives the Alarm to the whole Troop, and the Noiſe continues till you are gone, or till your Preſence

Preſence has made them fly off. Magpies, Blackbirds, and almoſt all the feathered Kinds do the ſame. Let a Cat but ſhew herſelf upon the top of a Houſe or in a Garden; the very firſt Sparrow that perceives her, exactly does what a Centinel who ſees the Enemy does among us. He by his Cries warns all his Companions, and ſeems to imitate the Noiſe of a Drum beating a March. See a Cock near his Hen, a Dove near the Female he is woeing, a Cat following his Mate, there is no end of their Diſcourſes.

Nor would there be any End of mine, if I were to leave no Particularity untouched, and yet I intend to ſet Bounds to this little Work. I ſhall add but one important Reflection, which in my Opinion is a kind of Demonſtration. We every Day ſpeak to Beaſts and they underſtand us very well. The Shepherd makes himſelf underſtood by his Sheep. The Cows underſtand all the Milk-maid ſays to them. We ſpeak to our Horſes, Dogs, and Birds, and they underſtand us. Beaſts in their turn ſpeak to us, and we underſtand them.

How much more muſt they make themſelves underſtood by their Like! For with regard to them we can have no other than a foreign Language; and if Nature has enabled them to underſtand a foreign Language, how can ſhe have refuſed them the Faculty of Underſtanding and Speaking, a natural one. Your Bitch, for Inſtance, has a great deal of Wit, you converſe with her all day long: You underſtand her, and ſhe underſtands you: But you may be ſure that when a Dog comes to careſs her, ſhe underſtands and is underſtood by him ſtill much better.

Confeſs then, Madam, that Beaſts ſpeak, and that it is fit to believe it, ſince Reaſon, the Laws of Nature, Matters of Fact, and Experience, all concur to prove it to a Degree of Evidece capable of fixing our Uncertainty in that Point. However, I don't know whether I have perſuaded you. For I never

never knew any thing ſo difficult in the World, as to perſuade any one of a Sentiment which he has not himſelf fetched from his own Lights; unleſs it flatters Self-love. But you will own at leaſt, that my Opinion is ſufficiently ſupported, to have a Place among the ſeveral Syſtems that fill up the Leiſure of Philoſophers. Another Confeſſion which I require of you, and which ſhall be infinitely more agreeable to me, is, that you cannot but be ſatisfied with my Complaiſance; and to leave you nothing to deſire on this Point, I ſhall here proceed and treat on the third and laſt Point remaining to be examined.

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## III.

### *Of the Language of* BEASTS.

DO you expect, Madam, that becauſe I am perſuaded that Beaſts ſpeak; I muſt explain their Language to you, and give you a Dictionary of it? I own the Thing appears very difficult to me, and I am at no ſmall loſs how to begin. I ſhall go back to our Principle; and following the Order of the different Reflections which this Subject ſhall ſuggeſt, I ſhall do all you can reaſonably require for the clearing of this Matter. But you are to expect none but general Obſervations; for Particularities would here degenerate into downright Buffoonry.

Why has Nature given Beaſts the Faculty of Speech? Why, to no other End but that they might expreſs their Deſires and Sentiments one to another, and by that Means ſupply their Wants and whatever is neceſſary for their Preſervation. I know that Language in general has ſtill another Intention, which is to expreſs Ideas, Knowledge, Reflections, and Arguments. But whatever Syſtem we follow as to the Knowledge of Beaſts, even though it were my

Syſtem of Devils which gives them a ſpiritual Soul capable of reaſoning; it is certain that Nature indowed them with no other Knowledge but that which is uſeful and neceſſary for the Preſervation of the Species and of each Individual. Conſequently, no abſtract Ideas, no metaphyſical Reaſonings, no various Reſearches upon all the Objects which ſurround them, no other Science in ſhort but that of being in Health, of Self-preſervation, of avoiding whatever can hurt, and of procuring whatever can be beneficial to them. Therefore none of them was ever ſeen making Speeches in public, or diſputing about Cauſes and their Effects. They know no other than the Animal Life.

From this Reflection flows another, *viz.* that at the ſame Time that Nature has confined the Knowledge of Beaſts within ſo narrow a Compaſs, ſhe of Neceſſity has alſo proportionably confined their Deſires, their Paſſions, and of courſe their Wants. For it is our Deſires that make our Wants, and Knowledge that gives Birth to our Deſires. To know that one may be happy and to wiſh to be ſo, is in the Heart of Man but one and the ſame Thing. Before he had ſinned, his Eyes were ſhut to all worldly and ſenſible Goods. He had no Deſire for them. Sin opened his Eyes, and to his Misfortune he coveted theſe Goods. Happy the wiſe Man who knows how to reſtrain his Deſires within the Bounds preſcribed by Religion and Reaſon. No more of your Mortality, you will ſay, let us come to the Point.

Glory, Grandeur, Riches, Reputation, Pageantry, and Luxury, are Names unknown to Beaſts, and which you will not find in the Dictionary of their Language. They can expreſs nothing but their Deſires, and theſe are limited purely to what is neceſſary for their Preſervation. Hear a Dog ſpeak. He never will complain that his Kennel is not gilt, or his Meal not offered him in a Silver Diſh. He never will ſue for the Privilege of commanding all

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the Dogs in the Houſe. All he will ask from you is a ſmall Portion of Food to ſubſiſt on. If you menace him, he will endeavour to appeaſe you. If you leave him alone, by his Cries he will expreſs his Deſpair, and the Apprehenſion he is under of being abandoned for ever. If you take him with you o' walking, he will thank you with a thouſand Expreſſions of Joy. If he ſees any Object that frightens him, he will by his Motions and Barkings inform you of it. In ſhort ſpeak to him of eating, drinking, ſleeping, running, fooling, of defending himſelf againſt his Enemy, and of defending you as his Protector and only Support, he will underſtand and anſwer you very well, becauſe all this tends to his Preſervation, for which alone Nature has given him the Faculty of Underſtanding, and that of making himſelf underſtood, that is of ſpeaking. But avoid treating with him about Philoſophy and Morality. It would be uſing a foreign Language, to all the Expreſſions of which he is an abſolute Stranger. His Knowledge and Wants do not reach ſo far; but bring a Bitch to him. They will ſoon get acquainted, and the Converſation begin. Now are you to expect that he will loſe Time, in making Compliments to the Fair upon her Beauty, her Shape, Wit, Extraction and Youth. All theſe Advantages are to him ſo many unknown Ideas, which he can neither underſtand nor expreſs. The only Thing that moves him at that Inſtant is a Deſire of multiplying his Species, or at leaſt of uſing the proper Means for it. On this only Topick it is that the whole Converſation runs. But then it is Life and Fire itſelf. In an amorous Beaſt, every thing is as expreſſive as in the moſt paſſionate Man. His Geſtures, his Voice, his Motions, all in ſhort ſpeak his Paſſion.

This Principle ſupplies us with our firſt Obſervation upon the Language of Beaſts, *viz.* that it is very limited, ſince it does not extend beyond the Neceſſaries of Life. However, let us not impoſe upon

ourſelves with regard to this Point. To take Things right, the Language of Beaſts appears ſo limited to us only with Relation to ours, which is perhaps too diffuſe. Limited as it is, it is ſufficient to Beaſts, and more would be of no ſervice to them. Were it not to be wiſhed, that ours, at leaſt in ſome reſpects, were leſs abundant and prolix? Men are naturally great Talkers, and, if I dare ſay ſo, blab much. They never have Words enough to expreſs all they want to ſay. Not ſatisfied with ſimple Ideas, they love as it were to diſſect them into Sub-diviſions; they ſometimes ſeem willing to anatomize an Idea or a Sentiment, as a Surgeon would do a Man's Head. So many Words muſt of courſe be newly coined: And what Words too! why, ſuch as are void of Meaning, obſcure, equivocal, and fitter to breed Diſputes than to inſtruct the Mind.

On the other Hand, how do Men abuſe the Facility of ſpeaking Nature has given them! How many Errors and Falſhoods are the ordinary Topicks of our Converſations! How many Extravagances and Trifles, Slanderings and wicked Diſcourſes! If Beaſts ſhould hear us converſe, prate, lye, ſlander, and rave; would they have Reaſon to envy us the Uſe we make of Speech? They have not our Privileges; but in recompenſe they have not our Failings. They ſpeak little, but always to the purpoſe, and that knowingly. They always ſpeak Truth, and never deceive, not even in point of Love. And is not this an Advantage they have over us? With regard to this, they are nearly in the ſame Caſe with the Peaſants in our Countries, and the Negroes and Savages of *America*. I might even make Philoſophers of them, and compare at leaſt many of their Species with *Diogenes* living in a little Tub, content with bare Neceſſaries, avoiding the Commerce of Men, and never ſpeaking but out of meer Neceſſity. Such is one of thoſe great long whiskered and well-furred Cats, which you ſee quietly couching in a Corner,

Corner, leiſurely digeſting his Food, ſleeping at Diſcretion, ſometimes taking the Diverſion of Hunting, and moreover enjoying Life with Tranquility, without minding the Events which ruffle us, and without plaguing his Brains with a thouſand needleſs Reflections, nor caring to impart his own Thoughts to others. 'Tis true, the Sight of a She-Cat will be ſufficient to diſconcert all this Philoſophy; but are our Philoſophers a whit wiſer on the like Occaſion?

Let us however ſtick cloſe to Truth. I intend neither to be ſeduced nor to dazzle my own Eyes by Arguments leſs ſolid than ſpecious. Beaſts in general ſpeak little. There are even ſome of ſo ſilent a Diſpoſition, that they won't drop four Words a Day. Such are among thoſe we know, Aſſes, Horſes, Oxen, Sheep, and the major Part of the Quadrupeds. The Reaſon is very plain: It is becauſe Nature has given theſe Animals only a Food ſo very ſlight and eaſy to be digeſted, that they are inceſſantly obliged to renew it, in order to prevent Hunger, and this takes up moſt of their Leiſure. But in return you muſt own, that there are Animals which ſpeak without the leaſt Intermiſſion. Such are among others the Birds. (And here I beg of you to obſerve that it is the Females who ſpeak the leaſt) As the Language of Birds is, as I may ſay, the beſt articulated, and the moſt ſenſible to us, let us take it for an Example. From it you ſhall be able to judge of the Language of the other Beaſts, by putting between them the Differences which are eaſily obſerved in each Species.

Birds ſing, they ſay: But this is a Miſtake. Birds do not ſing, but ſpeak: What we take for Singing is no more than their natural Language. Do the Magpy, the Jay, the Raven, the Owl, and the Duck ſing? What makes us believe that they ſing is their tuneful Voice. Thus the *Hottentots* in *Africa* ſeem to cluck like Turkey-cocks tho' it be the natural Accent of their Language, and thus ſeveral Nations ſeem to us to ſing, when they indeed ſpeak.

Birds,

Birds, if you will, ſing in the ſame Senſe; but they ſing not for Singing's Sake, as we fancy they do. Their Singing is always an intended Speech; and it is comical enough that there ſhould be thus in the World ſo numerous a Nation, which never ſpeak otherwiſe but tunably and muſically. But in ſhort, what do theſe Birds ſay? The Queſtion ſhould be propoſed to *Apollonius Tyanæus*, who boaſted of underſtanding their Language. As for me, who am no Diviner, I can give you no more than probable Conjectures.

Let us take for our Example the Magpy, which is ſo great a Chatterer. It is eaſy to perceive, that her Diſcourſes or Songs are varied. She ſometimes lowers or raiſes her Voice, ſometimes haſtens or ſlackens the Meaſure, and ſometimes lengthens or ſhortens her Chit-chat. And theſe evidently are ſo many different Sentences. Now following the Rule I have laid down, that the Knowledge, Deſires, Wants, and of courſe the Expreſſions of Beaſts are confined to what is uſeful or neceſſary for their Preſervation, methinks nothing is more eaſy than at firſt, and in general to underſtand the Meaning of theſe different Phraſes. Nor muſt you take this for Pleaſantry; it is downright Truth, or at leaſt what I thought came neareſt to it. For a Magpy having no Speech but what is uſeful or neceſſary to her, whenever ſhe ſpeaks do but obſerve what Circumſtances ſhe is in with regard to her Wants. Then reflect what you would ſay yourſelf in a like Situation, and this will be exactly the very thing ſhe ſays. For Inſtance, if ſhe ſpeaks, eating with a good Appetite, ſhe infallibly ſays at that time what you would ſay yourſelf on the like Occaſion: "That is very good; that does me good." If you offer her ſomething bad, ſhe immediately ſays, as you would yourſelf, "This does not pleaſe me; "this is not good for me." In a Word, ſuppoſe yourſelf to be in the ſeveral Circumſtances of one who cannot expreſs any thing but his Wants, and you

you will find in you own Diſcourſe the Interpretation of what a Magpy ſays in thoſe Circumſtances : " There is nothing more to be had here. Let us go " to ſome other Place. Where are you o' going, " Mate ? I am going ; follow me. Come quick, " come in haſte. Where are you ? Here I am. " Don't you hear me ? You eat all. I ſhall beat " you. Aye aye, you hurt me. Who is coming " there ? I am afraid. Have a care, have a care. " Alarm, alarm ! Let us hide ourſelves. Let us " fly away." You ſee I could ſwell this Dictionary with many the like Phraſes, eſpecially if I ſhould add to it all the Expreſſions ſuggeſted by Love, Jealouſy, Grief, and Joy. But is it not a great deal, that I have dared to give you a Specimen of it ?

Now I mention Joy ; give me leave here to make a ſhort Digreſſion. Do you know that our ancient Philoſophers pretended that Beaſts do not laugh, and that Laughing is an eſſential Property of Man, excluſive of Brutes ? But is not this again an ancient Miſtake, and is it not evident that Beaſts laugh very heartily after their own Manner, and every whit as well as Man himſelf ? See a couple of young Puppies romping together in a Field, catching, playing Tricks, and frightening one another in Jeſt. Can all this be done without Laughing ? Is it eſſential to Laughing, that it be done, as in Man, by a Motion of the Lips and Mouth, with a convulſive Sound of Voice ? Laughing is no more than an Expreſſion of Joy, and that Expreſſion is neceſſarily different in the different Species of Animals. Man laughs after his own Manner, and the Dog after his. No matter whether it is by a ſudden burſting of the Voice, or by a ſimple Motion of the Ears or the Tail, or by ſome other the like Expreſſion : It is ſtill Laughing. What Party are you going to eſpouſe, Madam : Pray ſuſpend your Deciſion a Moment. I am of the Opinion of the ancient Philoſophers myſelf ; and this for the following Reaſon : Laughing is an Expreſſion

preſſion of Pleaſure and Joy. But all Pleaſure and Joy do not excite Laughter: The only Joy which makes us laugh, is that which is accompanied with Surprize, and which is excited in us at the unexpected Sight of ſome odd Mixture of two inconſiſtent Ideas or Things; as of a Magiſtrate dreſſed like a Harlequin, or of an aukward Fellow taking upon him the Man of Skill. This is ſo very true, that the ſame thing which makes us laugh in ordinary Occurrences; on ſome other Occaſions appears no longer comical to us. We laugh at a Man, who for his Diverſion or out of Vanity, trying to leap over a Ditch full of Water, falls into the Middle of it: But let the ſame Accident happen to another running from an armed Enemy, far from laughing, we are very ſorry for it; therefore, to be capable of Laughter, we muſt be likewiſe capable of comparing two Ideas together, and of perceiving that Inconſiſtency that is between them. Now this is what Beaſts can never do, becauſe they have none but direct Notions: They have Sentiments of Satisfaction, Pleaſure and Joy; and the major Part expreſs them very diſtinctly; but they cannot have the Joy which proceeds from Reflection or Compariſon. Therefore Beaſts never laugh, and the ancient Philoſophers were in the right. Now again to our Birds:

It may be objected, that Birds always repeat the ſame thing, and conſequently vary not their Phraſes as I pretend they do. To this I anſwer, that beſides the Differences of Quickneſs and Slowneſs, of High and Low, of Length and Shortneſs, which it is eaſy to obſerve in the Language of Beaſts, there are very likely many others which we do not perceive, for want of underſtanding their Language, but which Birds among themſelves perceive very well. Can we diſtinguiſh their Phyſiognomy? We hardly ſuſpect that there is a Difference of Phyſiognomy among them. Nothing however is more certain, and they never miſtake it. I have ſeen a Swallow carrying

Food

Food to ſix or ſeven little ones ranged in a Row upon the Hand of a Dial. They changed their Places every Moment, and yet the Mother never miſtook in giving twice together Food to the ſame, but remembered every one of them. Let a Ewe in a Flock of a hundred Lambs hear her own bleat, ſhe immediately knows him again, and haſtens to him. Two Sparrows will know one another by their Voice among a thouſand. I might here alledge a hundred other like Facts, to prove that all Animals have, in their mutual Correſpondence, a Delicacy of Diſcernment, which is not within our reach, and which makes them obſerve Differences among themſelves which are altogether imperceptible to us. If then many Birds ſeem to us always to ſing the ſame Note, as the Sparrow, the Chaffinch, and the Canary-Bird; we muſt not thence conclude that they are ſaying the ſame thing for ever. Let us rather believe that it is occaſioned by the Groſſneſs of our Organs of Hearing, with regard to a Language which is quite ſtrange and unknown to us. When we ſay in French *Chaſſez ce* Mâtin, & *Je Suis arrivé ce* Matin: We diſtinguiſh theſe two *Matins* by the Pronounciation; but their Difference is ſo very inſenſible to a Foreigner, that he can hardly perceive it. The *Chineſe* Language is full of Differences of this Kind, which Foreigners are at the greateſt Loſs to perceive or execute. I fancy that a Man born deaf, who ſhould for the firſt time hear People converſe, would (not knowing any thing of Vowels, Words, and Syllables) alſo believe that they repeat the ſame thing over and over. Such is the Judgment we paſs upon the Language of Birds.

However, I ſhall not over do this Reflection, and pretend that a Nightingale in the Spring varies his Diſcourſe as much as he does his Notes, or that a Canary-bird in his Cage utters ſo many different Phraſes as he repeats his Tune over. No, I am on the contrary perſuaded that Birds are Chatterers, and

love Repetitions. It is even neceſſary they ſhould be ſo; and the Reaſon is this: To ſay, *I love you*, we have a hundred ſynonymous Phraſes and different Expreſſions; and there is no Thought but what we can dreſs many different Ways. This is the Reſult of the Superiority of our Knowledge, and of the Multiplicity of our Ideas, and, as I may ſay, of the Pliancy and Extent of our Genius, which comprehends ſeveral Objects at once, and perceives their reciprocal Relations. It is not thus with Beaſts: Nature has confined their Knowledge within Bounds ſo very narrow, that they can conſider but one ſingle Object at the ſame time; and as they always conſider it ſimply and in the ſame Manner; they likewiſe have generally but one way of expreſſing their Knowledge and Sentiments. This Obſervation is of Importance to know the Language of Beaſts in a more perfect Manner. It is not only confined, as I ſaid, to the Objects belonging to their Preſervation, but alſo limited in its own Nature, having commonly but one Expreſſion for each Object; and this is the Cauſe of their frequent Repetitions. For as it is natural for Beaſts always to inſiſt upon the ſame Object till their Deſire is fulfilled, or diverted by another more preſſing, and as they have but one Way to explain themſelves upon each Object; it is neceſſary that they ſhould always repeat the ſame Expreſſion, and that this Repetition ſhould laſt as long as they are taken up with the ſame Thing. Thus a Dog barking in the Night on Account of ſome Noiſe he has heard, evidently repeats this Phraſe over and over, "Have "a care! I hear a Noiſe which gives me Uneaſi-"neſs: Or, I ſee ſome body I miſtruſt"; and he will not ceaſe repeating it till his Apprehenſions are over. Thus a Chaffinch for ever repeats to his Mate the ſame Expreſſion of his Love and Tenderneſs, and will tell her the ſame Phraſe twenty times over, "I "love you, I love you," or ſomething equivalent. But in other Circumſtances, as for Inſtance, thoſe of

Anger

Anger and Jealouſy, of Satisfaction and Grief, we ſee that both Dog and Chaffinch uſe many other different Phraſes; or if we do not perceive the Differences of them, it is meerly the fault of our Organs, or the little Knowledge we have of their ſeveral Accents.

It is then true with regard to Birds whom we have taken for our Example, that moſt of them are great Repeaters. Nay, it is not enough to ſay *moſt of them*, for they are all in the ſame Caſe, and if the Nightingale ſeems to uſe fewer Repetitions, it is only becauſe his Phraſe is longer and the Difference of his Notes more perceptible. But it is nevertheleſs true that they have different Phraſes, for the different Sentiments they have a Mind to expreſs; and that this Repetition proceeds only from their inſiſting long upon the ſame Object on one hand, and from their having but one Expreſſion for each Object on the other. Is this a Fault in their Language? I don't deny it. But again, compare if you pleaſe this pretended Fault with the pretended Advantage of our Amplifications, Metaphors, Hyperboles, and intricate Phraſes, and you will ever find in Birds Simplicity and Truth, and in the human Language abundance of idle Works and rank Falſities.

At leaſt you cannot refuſe the Simplicity of their Language an Advantage which ours has not. For it is uniform, and with regard to each Species, at all Times and in all the Countries in the World, for ever the ſame: Whereas in the human Kind not only each Nation has its peculiar Language, but the Dialect of every People varies perpetually, and after a certain Time it is no longer what it was. A *Frenchman* of *Charlemaigne*'s Time would no more underſtand us than we now underſtand a *Spaniard* or an *Engliſhman*. The Language of Beaſts and Birds is not ſubject to theſe troubleſome Variations. The Nightingales and Canary-Birds that now are, ſpeak exactly the ſame Language as their Species ſpoke before the Flood.

Carry them to the *Indies* and *China*, they will not hear a foreign Language there; and the very Moment of their Arrival they will be able to converſe with their like without the Aſſiſtance of Interpreters. Is it not to be wiſhed that Man, as was ſometimes propoſed, would upon this Model eſtabliſh a general Language, that might be underſtood all over the Univerſe.

Obſerve, Madam, that this Simplicity or Sterility in the Language of Beaſts, will appear ſtill leſs defective to you, if you conſider that its Imperfection is replaced by Miens, Geſtures, and Motions, which are a kind of Language very intelligible, and a Supplement of the vocal Expreſſion. A Dog for Inſtance, has no vocal Expreſſion to ask Pardon when he finds you are angry with him; but what does he do? Why he humbles himſelf before you; he cringes at your Feet in the Poſture of a Supplicant. He has no Phraſe to ſay open me the Door; but he ſcratches at it, and thereby informs you of his wanting to come in or go out. Are not theſe ſpeaking Actions? Even ſo; ſince they make themſelves well underſtood. This would be the Place, as the vulgar Proverb ſays, to make a Commentary upon the Grimaces of Monkeys. For it is beyond all Queſtion, that if among theſe Grimaces there are ſome which are no more than meer Contorſions, there are on the other Hand ſome which are ſo many Expreſſions fully equivalent to Words and Phraſes.

But do I not take too much Advantage, by thus alledging on the one Hand the Example of Birds which are really great Talkers, and on the other Hand that of Dogs and Monkeys which are full of Geſticulation, while there are beſides theſe ſo many other Species of Beaſts, which have very few or even no vocal Expreſſions at all, and in which we moreover obſerve none of the above Geſtures or ſpeaking Actions? No; I intended not to diſſemble any thing. If I have propoſed theſe Examples, it

is meerly becauſe thoſe Beaſts living amongſt us, we know them much better than the other Species, and becauſe we muſt always argue from the moſt ſenſible Examples, in order to illuſtrate Facts that are leſs notorious. But what if I have alledged the Inſtance of Cats and Dogs? Nature is conſtantly uniform. This is an unqueſtionable Principle; and conſequently what eſſential Parts we obſerve in one ſingle Species of Beaſts, we are to ſuppoſe the ſame in all the reſt.

I own Fiſhes and Reptiles here oppoſe no ſmall Difficulty to our Prejudices. How is it to be conceived, that a Carp is not indeed the dumb Creature it is commonly thought to be, and what kind of Language can be imagin'd from two Palmer-worms or two Ants? The Birds ſing, the Dogs bark, the Wolves howl, the Stags bellow, the Horſes neigh, the Sheep bleat: But Fiſhes and crawling Inſects appear abſolutely dumb.

'Tis true, if there are a few Species of Beaſts whoſe Language is more ſenſible than that of the reſt, and upon which I may have ventured to form ſome probable Conjectures, it would be requiring too much of me to pretend that I ſhould explain the Language of Fiſhes and Reptiles in the ſame Manner. For they may very well be proved to have a Language, be it what it will, ſince all the other Species are endowed with one. But who will attempt to know and diſtinguiſh it? Part of them live in an Element forbidden us, and the others eſcape our Sight by their Smallneſs.

Let us, however, with great Care avoid giving ourſelves up too much to our own Prejudices. How How do we know that Fiſhes have not as many and perhaps more vocal Expreſſions than the Birds themſelves? They all of them ſeem to have been formed nearly upon the ſame Model. Some fly, others ſwim; but flying and ſwimming is one and the ſame Thing; the Element alone is different. It is written in *Geneſis*, that God created at the ſame Time the Birds and Fiſhes

Fiſhes from the Boſom of the Waters: Which ſerved ſome Monks as a Pretence to perſuade themſelves that on Fiſh-Days they might indifferently eat of both Kinds. Fiſhes are provided with five Senſes, which we obſerve in Birds and in all other Animals. Why ſhould not they have the Faculty of ſpeaking like the reſt? If we hear them neither ſpeak nor ſing, it is perhaps for want of a proper Organ to hear them. The Waters is full and thoroughly penetrated with Air which Fiſhes breathe. Why might they not with that Air and by means of a Spring equivalent to the Tongue and Throat, form Vibrations and Sound too nice indeed for our Ears, but which might be heard in every Species? Pray obſerve that the Ear of Man is extremely coarſe, and that this Coarſeneſs is the Reſult of a neceſſary Providence. For were our Ear ſenſible to the minuteſt Vibrations of the Air we live in, we ſhould be for ever ſtunned with a thouſand confus'd Noiſes, which would never permit us to diſtinguiſh any one of them. There are then certainly in the Air many Sounds which we do not hear. Such is the Noiſe of a Silk-worm that gnaws a Mulberry-leaf. If he is alone, or if there are but few of them together, no body can hear them; but put a certain Number of them in a Cabinet, and then all theſe little Noiſes joined in Uniſon become mighty ſenſible to our Ears. How much more is it poſſible that there be in the Water Noiſes inſenſible to us, and that Fiſhes by that Means ſpeak without being audible to us. At leaſt I delight in thinking ſo, not to rob any Production in Nature of the Perfection which ſhe is uſed to give to all. Nor could I think without a kind of Philoſophical Melancholy, that ſhe had doomed to an eternal Silence innumerable Nations, which inhabit the Immenſity of the Seas and Rivers. Silence is the Portion of the Dead. Speaking inlivens the Living themſelves. You may laugh at this modern Notion as much as you pleaſe, and jeſt upon my ſpeaking Fiſh, as doubtleſs he was laugh'd at who firſt mentioned

tioned the Flying fiſh ; but take Care that the one be not as true as the other, and that there be not more Prejudice than Reaſon in your Jokes. For my Part, I find this Opinion agreeable to Reaſon and Probability ; and it is a ſufficient Motive to me to eſpouſe it, till I am undeceived by ſtronger Arguments.

The Reptiles and Inſects are juſt in the ſame Caſe. There are many Kinds of Reptiles, which have very diſtinct vocal Expreſſions ; ſuch as Serpents, Frogs, and Toads ; and conſequently, arguing upon the Principle of the Uniformity of Nature, we are intitled to ſuppoſe an equivalent in the Reſt ; not to mention ſupplemental Miens, Geſtures, and Looks. It is not quite ſo with the Inſects. There is no Species of them having, that we know of, vocal Expreſſion properly ſo called. For we know that the Cry of the Cricket, the Singing of the Graſs-hopper, the Noiſe of certain Butterflies, and the Humming of the Flies, is not what we call a vocal Sound, and that it is a Noiſe cauſed by the Trembling of a Membrane. But what of that ? It cannot be doubted but that the Cry of the Cricket and Graſs-hopper ſerves them to call each other in order to meet, and very likely to converſe. It may be thought that the Humming of the Flies likewiſe ſerves them to know each other in every Society, either by the Uniformity and Uniſon of the Tone, or by imperceptible Differences not within our Reach ; which is equivalent to vocal Expreſſion, and is at the ſame time a Proof how Nature, always uniform as to what is general and eſſential, is at the ſame time ingenious in varying the Means and Particulars of her own Productions. Now, what Nature has done for ſome Inſects, ſhe certainly has done for all.

There is for inſtance a Kind of Spiders which have a very ſingular Method of teſtifying to each other their Deſire of being together. 'Tis true, I was only an Ear-Witneſs of this ; but I have been well aſſured that they were Spiders which made the Noiſe I am going to mention. A Spider who wants Company, ſtrikes,

ſtrikes, with I know not what Inſtrument, againſt the Wall or Wood where ſhe has ſettled, nine or ten gentle Blows, nearly like the Vibrations of a Watch, but a little louder and quicker, after which ſhe ſtays for an Anſwer. If ſhe hears none, ſhe repeats the ſame by Intervals for about an Hour or two, reſuming this Exercife and reſting alternately Night and Day. After two or three Days, if ſhe hears nothing, ſhe changes her Habitation, till ſhe finds one that anſwers her. It is another Spider which anſwers her exactly in the ſame Manner, and as it were by Eccho. If the latter likes the Propoſal, the Converſation grows brisker, and the Beating becomes more frequent. Give Attention to it, and you will find by the Noiſe that they gradually approach each other, and that the Beatings come at laſt ſo cloſe that they are confounded, after which you hear no more Noiſe. Very likely the reſt of the Converſation is whiſpered. I have ſometimes amuſed myſelf in making the Eccho of a Spider which I heard beating, and whoſe Noiſe I imitated. She anſwered me punctually. She even ſometimes attacked me, and began the Converſation, and I have often given that Diverſion to ſeveral People, whom I told it was a familiar Spirit.

How many like Diſcoveries might we make upon Inſects, if our Organs were delicate enough to ſee and perceive their Miens and Motions, and to hear their Voices, or what ſerves them inſtead of Voices! I am indeed perſuaded, that we ſhould find in the Ants, Worms, Scarabeus's, Caterpillers, Palmerworms, Mites, and in all the Inſects, Language deſigned for their Preſervation and the Supply of their Wants. And as there are certain Species of Inſects in which we obſerve greater Induſtry and Knowledge than in large Animals, it is probable that theſe Species have likewiſe a more perfect Language in proportion, always confined however to the Neceſſaries of Life.

I have

I have ſeen ſome carrying their Conjectures much farther, and pretending that before Man ſinned Beaſts ſpoke very diſtinctly among themſelves, and pronounced a Language which Man perfectly underſtood, as they likewiſe underſtood the Language of a Man. He ſupported this Conjecture upon the Converſation which the Serpent had with *Eve* in *Eden*. If Beaſts at that time, ſays he, had had no other Language but what they have at preſent, what muſt have been *Eve*'s Amazement to hear a Serpent ingaging in Converſation, and arguing coherently with her. Let us judge of this from the Amazement of *Balaam* when he heard his Aſs ſpeak. Struck with this Wonder, he acknowledged his Crime, and obeyed God's Command. Again, let us judge of this from the Effect which a like Event would have on us. If we ſhould all on a ſudden ſee a Dog ſit over againſt us, and come out with a rational and coherent Diſcourſe, in order to engage us to commit ſome Crime, or even to perſuade us to ſomething in itſelf indifferent, what wou'd our Surprize be! Our Hair would ſtand an End; We ſhould think we ſaw the Devil; and far from ſuffering ourſelves to be prevailed upon, we would reject ſuch Counſels with Horror, at leaſt we ſhould miſtruſt them, and in all haſte go and conſult with ſome-body. Nevertheleſs, *Eve* did nothing of all this. *Eve*, who was ſo virtuous and clear-ſighted, quickly liſtened to the artful Diſcourſe of the Serpent, diſputed with him, and at laſt ſuffered herſelf to be ſeduced. The Serpent, concluded this Perſon, and all the other Beaſts muſt needs then have ſpoken as Men do, and there not ſpeaking now in the ſame Manner, muſt needs be a Puniſhment inflicted upon them by God, for having ſerved as an Organ to the Devil, and contributed to the Sin of Man.

This Fancy made me laugh, and if it diverts you I have a good Mind to let you adopt it, and the more ſo becauſe *Plato*, in his Politicks, had of Beaſts an Opinion much like this; becauſe *Joſephus* in his Antiquities was of the ſame Mind, and (what is of

much greater Weight) becauſe St. *Baſil* expreſsly ſays in his Homily concerning the earthly Paradiſe, of which he makes a very fine Deſcription, that it was peopled with Beaſts, *which underſtood each other, and ſpoke rationally.* Theſe are his very Words as far as I can remember; for I have not here a St. *Baſil* by me. But you would accuſe me perhaps of a Deſign to ſeduce you as the Serpent did *Eve*, if I ſhould neglect to tell you what is to be thought of this Opinion. It is but a frivolous Conjecture without any other Foundation except the Security of *Eve* arguing with the Serpent. Now this Foundation is altogether ruinous. For *Eve* before her Sin knew not what Fear or Diſtruſt were. She undoubtedly ſaw that the Serpent was no more than the Organ of ſome ſuperior Power. This even raiſed her Curioſity, and the more becauſe, being born immortal and free from Pain, ſhe knew very well that ſhe had nothing to fear; and her Curioſity ſtill increaſing her Raſhneſs, ſhe made the fatal Trial of her own Frailty. You ſee that nothing but Truth will do with me. Give me leave however to take advantage of the abovementioned Text of St. *Baſil*, to ſupport my Opinion concerning the Language of Beaſts. For if they underſtood each other and ſpoke rationally in the terreſtrial Paradiſe, that is with Knowledge, to the purpoſe, and agreeably to their Wants, why ſhould they have loſt this Prerogative?

It is time for me to put an End to this ſmall Piece. I am ready to return to *Paris*, and I intend that it ſhall go thither before me; that you may have time enough to reflect on it, and acquaint me with your Opinion of it at my return. But ſhall I then conclude without giving you a particular Dictionary of the Language of Beaſts? That muſt be: For you are ſenſible that the thing is impoſſible. There would be as many different Dictionaries as there are different Species of Beaſts. 'Tis true each Dictionary would be very ſhort, but their Number would be infinite. To give you that of the feathered Kind I muſt be able

able to diſtinguiſh and prick down the Quarters and half Quarters of the Tones which their Language is compoſed of. I ſhould be able to liſten to all they ſay in very different Occurrences, and they are ſo very ſprightly and wild a Nation, that it is impoſſible to follow them.

The Canary-bird is the moſt familiar. Therefore you will be able with a little Attention to find out the Meaning of moſt of his Phraſes. When he finds that his Mate neglects to ſit on her Eggs, and is too long abſent from her Neſt, liſten to what he ſays, he will for certain tell her that Moment that he is uneaſy, that ſhe muſt haſten to her Brood, and that he will beat her if ſhe does not take to her Neſt immediately. When the Hen obliged to keep her young warm under her has not Time to go abroad, and the Cock drops ſome Food out of his Beak into hers, ſhe teſtifies her Satisfaction to him by the clapping of Wings, and by a little Cry different from all the others, which muſt neceſſarily ſignify, " I am very glad: You do me " Pleaſure." There are among others two Circumſtances, in which the Canary-birds, as well as the Nightingale, the Chaffinch, the Linnet, and all Birds ſpeak, or if you will, ſing more than ordinary. I mean when he calls and is courting a Female, and when ſhe is ſitting on her Eggs or on her Brood. Though his Phraſe in both theſe Circumſtances ſeems to be the ſame, it may be obſerved however, that beſides the Differences which we do not perceive, his ſinging in the firſt Caſe is more lively, more brisk, and attended with greater Fire. And what can it ſignify then, if not this, " Come dear charming Female, who " lookeſt for a Husband; I ſhall marry thee; we " ſhall have a Houſhold in common?" In the ſecond Caſe, the Canary-bird and the Nightingale ſay quite other Things. The Neceſſity of removing the Fears of their Females, which are too buſy to mind much their own Security, is what makes them ſing on this Occaſion. The Husband watches for his Mate pearched on a neighbouring Branch, where he obſerves all

what paſſes, to inform her of it in caſe any Cauſe of Apprehenſion ſhould appear. If he ſhould ceaſe ſinging but a Moment, the uneaſy Female would quit her Neſt. She remains quietly there ſo long as he is ſinging; but it would be a Prejudice void of Probability to believe, that the Nightingale ſings meerly for ſinging's ſake, ſince Birds have no Notion of ſinging, or any Senſe of Harmony. But though we ſhould be under the Neceſſity of believing that he ſings, yet ſhould we ſtill ſuppoſe that he ſings Words, I mean that his Song ſignifies ſomething. And really, what can he intend to do then, if not to ſay to his Wife, "Be eaſy, I watch "for you; you have nothing to fear; I ſhall give "you Warning if any Thing happens amiſs." This is what Birds ſay and repeat all Day long on the like Occaſion. The Sparrow, more Laconick in his Style, ſays it in a very ſhort Phraſe, but which he is for ever repeating. The Phraſe of the Chaffinch is ſomething longer; that of the Canary-bird is longer ſtill; that of the Linnet is longer yet; and at laſt that of the Nightingale is the longeſt of all. For I look upon the whole Sequel of his ſinging as a ſingle Phraſe, which ſays no more than that of the Sparrow. Such is alſo the Diſcourſe of two Rival Cats mewing a Dialogue upon the Top of a Houſe. It is only a long Phraſe repeated, which expreſſes their Wrath and Jealouſy. Wherefore it is always followed by a Battle in Form, and by the Defeat of one of the two, ſo that one might compare them to the Heroes of *Homer*, who never failed to make long Speeches to each other before they came to Handy-cuffs.

I have inſenſibly made here a little Dictionary, which may, if you will, Madam, ſerve as a Key to explain as nearly as you can the Language of all Beaſts. Will you again have another very plain Method? This is it. The whole Language of Beaſts amounts to expreſſing the Sentiment of their Paſſions, and all their Paſſions may be reduced to a very ſmall Number, *viz.* Pleaſure, Pain, Anger, Fear, Love, the Deſire of eating, the Care of their Young. If then

you

you intend to have the Dictionary of the Language of Beaſts, obſerve them in the Circumſtances of theſe different Paſſions, and as they commonly have but one Expreſſion for each, you will ſoon compoſe your Dictionaries from the Model I have given you. Which done, you will of all theſe Dictionaries together compoſe a Polyglot which will contain all the different Languages of Beaſts. For Inſtance, this Phraſe, "I feel Pain;" you will render it at once in the Language of the Dog, the Cat, the Hog, the Magpy, the Black-bird, *&c.* The whole correctly pricked down in Sharps and Flats, and I give you my Word that this will produce a mighty comical Reading.

You ſee I am upon the merry Pin. And why not? But what will you ſay of my Sincerity? I ſhall here make you a Confeſſion, that will reduce the whole Language to almoſt nothing. I mean that you muſt abſolutely retrench from it whatever is called Phraſe or grammatical Conſtruction, not excepting the moſt Contracted. Would you for inſtance believe, that the moſt eloquent Nightingale cannot ſay in his Language, *I love, I am very glad, I feel Pleaſure.* This however is perfectly true. Any Phraſe into which there enters what you call Grammatically firſt, ſecond, and third Perſon, *I, you, he, ye,* and any other the like Pronoun, together with what you call Nouns Collective, Relative, Comparative, &c. are all of them to be blotted out of the Dictionary of Beaſts. The Reaſon of this is quite plain: For all theſe Words expreſs arbitrary and metaphyſical Ideas, which Beaſts can by no means have. They have none but direct Notions, abſolutely confined to the preſent and material Object that ſtrikes their Senſes. Man, who is infinitely ſuperior both in his Language and Ideas, cannot expreſs his Mind without compoſing his Diſcourſe of relative and perſonal Terms, that determine the Senſe and Application of it. Even thoſe who ſpeak a Language worſe, as a German who ſpeaks broken Engliſh will tell you: *Me ſuffer Fever; You love the Wine.* In Beaſts the Expreſſion is ſtill much inferior to this Jargon;

gon; and if I have repreſented their Diſcourſes by Phraſes compoſed after our own manner, it is becauſe I could not render them otherwiſe: For in good Truth, Beaſts in a Manner cannot expreſs any thing more than the Name of the Paſſions they feel. They can have no other Expreſſions than thoſe which correſpond to the following, *viz.* Pain, Pleaſure, Fear, Anger, *&c.*

I am ſorry things are not more to the Honour of Beaſts; but an Author muſt be juſt, and I never intended to aſcribe any thing to them but what Nature thought proper to give them. You are not to think however, that all is loſt. For to take things rightly, is it of any conſequence that Beaſts ſhould pronounce a Phraſe with diſtinction of Perſons, compoſed after our own Manner, provided they be as well underſtood? Your Bitch, 'tis true, cannot ſay to you, *I love you*; but what ſhe ſays in reality ſignifies that ſhe does love you, and you underſtand her very well. What would ſhe have, and what can you deſire more? Does it not come to the very ſame thing? Doubtleſs it does. Therefore, be not diſheartened, Madam, and if you have any ſpare time, you are at Liberty to make no account of the cavilling Diſtinction I have been juſt propoſing, and according to go ſeriouſly about making of your Dictionaries. How will you be charmed, when you are once arrived to the Point of being able to converſe with the Birds, and of Underſtanding all their domeſtick Secrets! You will no longer be ſeen any where but in Woods, and the World will perhaps accuſe me of having deprived them of your agreeable Company.

*I am*, &c.

*FINIS.*

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